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JEEVAN VEDA

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

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Being Sixteen Discourses in Bengali

on

Life—Its Divine Dynamics

Keshub Chandra

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

Translated into English by

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Third Edition

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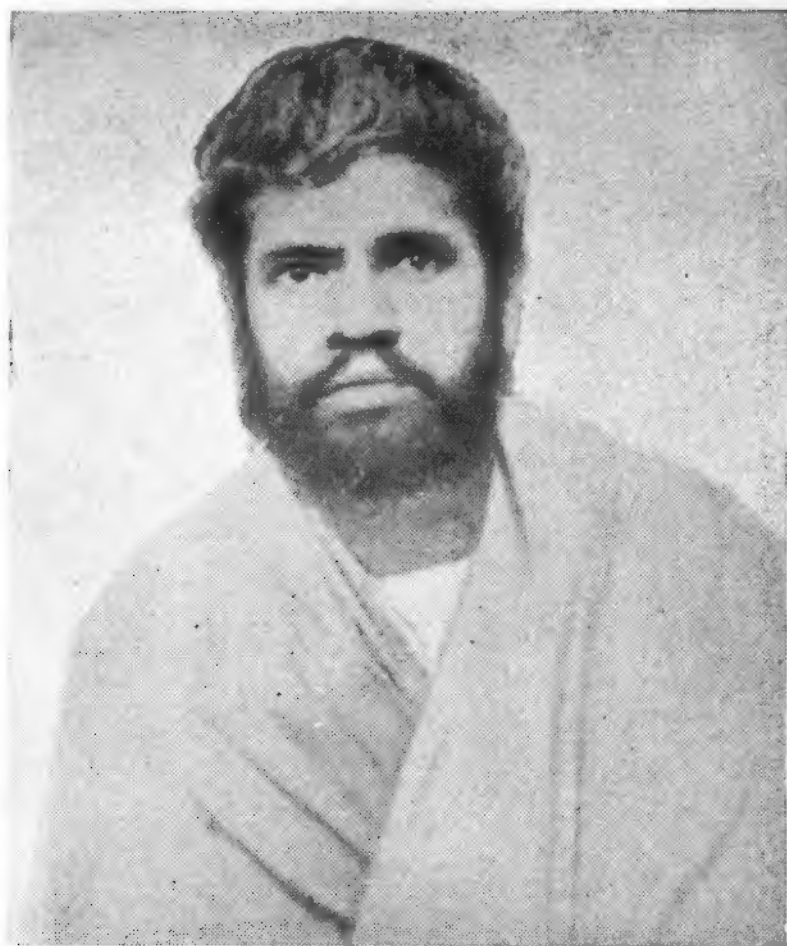
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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The sincerest thanks of the Nababidhan Trust are due to Shri Hakumatrai H. Mirchandani of Bombay for his valuable suggestions and encouragements to print and publish the Third Edition of Jeevan Veda by Keshub Chander Sen (Translated into English by Rev. Jamini Kanta Koar).

Keshub Chander Sen does not require any introduction. Literature and Journals of the latter half of the 19th century are replete with his life and works. This book reveals the inner springs of his life and actions in words of extreme simplicity, beauty and frankness, truly typical of the man. The book consists of sixteen short chapters and has been translated into various languages. Jamini Kanta Koar's translation is the fifth one in English and most literal. He took great pains to study the vast storehouse of Keshub's writings and to enter into the spirit of these discourses. The other four translations are by Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar, Dr. V. Rai, Dr. Prem Sundar Basu and Babu B. Mozoomdar.

This book should be read by every traveller on the path to a fuller and truer life. It is so universal in its dealings of the subject that any one of any community while reading the book will find a ready response from within about the process of unfoldment of one's own spiritual life.

The Jeevan Veda should also be read minutely by every student of History and of modern times or engaged in writing about them. Keshub is a much misunderstood man. His ethical and spiritual concepts are still hidden under misconceptions. His principles of *Adesh*, Universal Brotherhood, Greatmen, Pilgrimage to prophets, *Yoga* or Communion, Nationalism within Universalism. Loyalty to Rulers, Female

PREFACE

Emancipation, Mass Education, Politics, Synthesis of Religions and Religion of Harmony were all new and stirred up strifes in the past. A perusal of the Jeevan Veda is sure to shed new light on them and unveil hidden treasures of the New Dispensation enriching human civilisation.

**20th May, 1969
Calcutta**

**Sati Kumar Chatterji
President
Nababidhan Trust**

FOREWORD

IN THE WORDS OF KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

The New Man

“Such is the New Dispensation....It gives to history a meaning, to the action of Providence a consistency, to quarrelling churches a common bond and to successive dispensations a continuity....In blessed Eucharist let us eat and assimilate all the saints and prophets of the world. Thus shall we put on the New Man, and each of us will say,—the Lord Jesus is my will, Socrates my head, Chaitanya my heart, the Hindu Rishi my soul, and the philanthropic Howard my right hand. And thus transformed we shall bear witness to the New Gospel”.

—“*We Apostles of the New Dispensation*”, 22 January 1881

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The Church Universal

“Dost thou believe in the Church Universal, which is the deposit of all ancient wisdom and the receptacle of all modern science, which recognizes in all prophets and saints a harmony, in all scriptures a unity and through all dispensations a continuity, which abjures all that separates and divides and always magnifies unity and peace, which harmonizes reason and faith, yōga and bhakti, asceticism and social duty in their highest forms, and which shall make of all nations and sects one kingdom and one family in the fullness of time?”

—*The New Samhita*

The God of Harmony

"Lord. I would worship Thee and love Thee as Eternal Harmony. I have addressed Thee as Father and Guide, as Saviour and Comforter, and though I have found joy and peace in abundance in approaching Thee in these relations, I have attained only partial sanctification. My character, O my God, has all the imperfections of fragmentary faith, incomplete devotion and one-sided piety. Thou art not only perfection, but perfection in all things. Thou art the harmony of all truth and all goodness. If then, Thou art my master and my ideal and my pattern, I must follow Thee, and humbly strive to be as perfect as Thou art perfect. So Jesus, Thy Son, said, and so may it be with us all. Grant that we may not place before us broken human ideals of virtue for imitation ; grant that we may not follow this man or that man, this favourite teacher or that loved saint, as our special proclivities dictate or our interests incline ; grant that I and my brethren of the New Church may never be content with half-truths and half-goodnesses and little bits and patches of the white garment of holiness as the only possible human consummation of godly life ; but grant. O Thou Infinite Holiness, that we may learn to desire Thee and realize Thee in all things and ever press onward to that perfect harmony of character which is in Thee. How all truths shine in Thee, how all graces adorn Thy beautiful face ! The Jew's justice, the Christian's love, the Hindu's yoga, the Buddhist's nirvana, the Mahomedan's undivided loyalty, the Vaishnava's rapture, the Shakta's self-conquest, the ascetic's self-sacrifice, the philanthropist's usefulness, the scientist's wisdom, the householder's economy, the statesman's constitutionalism, all find in Thee their highest perfection and their most charming reconciliation. Thou art Philosopher and Poet and Artist, Thou art Creator, King

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and Judge, Thou art Father and Son, Mother and Daughter. Husband and Wife, all in one. Thou art truthfulness and mercy, strictness and sweetness, conscience and conciliation, absolute work and absolute rest, noisy civilization and serene all-absorbing communion, man's sternness and woman's tenderness, the child's playfulness and the gravity of age, all united in one harmonious whole. As I look on Thy beautiful harmony, my God, I am fascinated and my heart pants for its attainment. Father of Harmony, graciously hear my humble prayer, and make me a child of harmony at Thy feet. Deliver me from contradictions and littlenesses, and grant that I may be immersed in the deep sea of Thine eternal harmony."

—*Prayers*, 8 July 1883

Translator's Note

Keshub had heard the call to bear witness to the principles of spiritual life which were unfolded to him. He had expressed this two years back in his sermon on *Jeevan Grantha* (Book of Life) delivered on the 21 November 1880. Now came the final call at Darjeeling where under medical advice he was taken on the 4 June 1882. The change did not do him any good, he read the decree of God and hastened to speak out of the Divine Dynamics as unfolded in his life.

It was surely an act of Providence, an inspiration of God, for he passed away a year and a half after, on 8 January 1884, at the early age of forty-five.

The following taken from the concluding paragraph of the *Jeevan Veda* shows in what light Keshub regarded it :

"Let men all over the world read this life-gospel of mine and discuss its contents not to praise me but to remove from men's minds the wrong notion that God is far-off, that He has ceased to work miracles and have personal dealings with His devotees in the wonderful way He used to do in the past. Let men read the life-gospel of this sinner, ponder over every word of it, and let 'faith' and 'bhakti' surge up mightily within them."

—*Misreading my life*

A visit to the Himalayas always opened the floodgates of his deeper life. This particular stay from 10 June to 8 July 1882, was a period of singular exaltation of spirit. As a result we have about twenty-five Bengali prayers including one on "*Jeevan Veda*" and another on "*Dal-madhya-vartita*"¹, a number of articles² in English, including one on "Farewell to the Hills", and his correspondence with Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore after eleven years of silence bringing a response so inspiring and prophetic as to set the seal of God and eternity on their mutual relationship. Just four weeks of preparation at Darjeeling for the delivery of the epoch-making discourses on the principles of his spiritual life. Sixteen discourses on sixteen Sundays spread over twenty-three weeks from 23 July to 31 December 1882, the chapter headings, constituting the divine dynamics of the human soul in its ascent towards God and perfection, arranged in chronological sequence.

The history of the birth, growth and maturing of his moral and spiritual life, Keshub calls his *Jeevan Veda* the word *Jeevan* meaning life, and *Veda* being the name for the sacred books³ containing the earliest inspiration of the Aryan races which has for centuries moulded and regulated their life and character, their homes and institutions. To the Hindus these scriptures, whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity, are regarded as issuing from the mouth of the Supreme Creator (*Brahmah*),—the most primitive, original revelation, superhuman (*apaurusheya*) and infallible in character, and primal and final in authority. To use such a sacrosanct term in connection with one's life-story is nothing short of a sacrilege, a blasphemy. It is like a Jew—presuming to call his life—a new Torah, a Christian—a New

1. '*Acharyer Prarthana*' (New Edn.) Vol. III. P. 952

2. '*New Dispensation*' Vol. II. P. 64

3. '*New Dispensation*' Vol. II. P. 164—'*The Proposed Vedic School*'

Testament, a Parsi—a New Avesta, a Buddhist—a New Dhammapada and Moslem—a new Quran. And yet Keshub's use of the word means all these and much more besides, for he says, again and again, that man's life and soul is the vessel and repository of "Forty-thousand Vedas and Vedantas" ("*Challis-hazar Veda Vedanta*")¹ released in the state of pentecostal communion (*Utsavas*). It means the Divine Inspiration which has been already received, that which is being uttered now and that which will come to be received in the future. The Veda which has been received whether dealing with God's revelation in Nature, or in History, or in Great Men², Keshub calls mediate and secondary, whereas the revelation in the soul is called direct and primary. This living, flowing Veda is for Keshub the Veda *par excellence*.

Now let us see what he means by *Jeevan* or life, and how he connects life with Veda. In an article in "The Indian Mirror" 5 March 1876, on "The Four Vedas" of universal theism as contrasted with the sectarian Four Vedas of Primitive Hinduism, we find the following remarkable statement :

"We propose to dwell on what we regard as the Four Vedas of humanity, the four books of the universal scripture of mankind, written by God's hand. They are the natural and eternal *shastra* (scripture) which is the heritage of all mankind, and the wealth of all ages. Psychological analysis discovers and distinguishes four elements of humanity. These are mind, heart, soul and will ; in other words, cognition, emotion, devotion and conation. The human constitution is made up of these four

1. '*Acharyer Prarthana*,' 19 January 1883 — '*Brahmabani*'

2. Tracts : '*Revelation*' 1861 by Keshub

departments, the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and practical. To give the classification a more popular form, we may speak of thought, feeling, faith and action as constituting humanity. Now human nature viewed in a philosophical sense and as coming fresh and unsophisticated from the Divine hand is God's revelation to us. It is to the theist and to the philosopher both, the word of God. Both find in it wisdom and truth. All the elements of religion and morality are there. Out of them are formed by reflection and arrangement the sciences of true theology and ethics...Complete wisdom can then be realized when all these four books are studied and comprehended. So likewise a true church is then only realized when all these are duly and fully realized in its creed and discipline. The student of Divinity must study and develop the four Vedas, that is, the Theology of the Mind, the Theology of the Heart, the Theology of the Soul, and the Theology of the Will, and have wisdom, love, spirituality and obedience, becoming *Jnanis*, *Bhaktas*, *Yogis* (Rishis) or *Sevaks*."

To Keshub "Human nature is God's revelation...the word of God". This composite human nature of thought, feeling, willing and soul-life Keshub visualized in his *Jeevan Veda* chapter on *Viveka* or Inner voice, as a two-storied structure (*dwotala bari*), the lower storey being tenanted by the human,—"The little bird¹", and the upper chamber occupied by God, the Holy, the Highest. not like two water-tight compartments but the two natures commingled as it were in a common receptacle (*ek batite*). On this two-levelled, bipolar vision of humanity rests the entire

1. Address on 'Am I an Inspired Prophet' 1879—by Keshub

fabric of Keshub's life and teachings. God indwells man¹ as the "Resident Chief", the "Director", the "Overruling voice". In a lecture on "God and our Relations to Him"², Keshub says :

"All our powers, senses and energies, our very being derive their strength, their vitality from that *active principle* which is working within us, and which is synonymous with God. It is thus that our relations to God are determined; *they are found in the very constitution of our self*. Something is intimately connected with an all-pervading not-self, and it *derives its entire vitality from that active, central principle*. God is, in the language of the Upanishads, *Pranasya Pranam*, or the Life of all life."

In how many and various ways is this relationship represented as having a higher and a lower potential, a "dynamic gradient", a nuclear and a basal centre, an ascending and descending movement accounting for the tidal flow of vital energy, and the lightning play of psychic processes !

'Human nature, the word of God', we will not stop to enquire how this statement lies at the root of Keshub's new doctrines of Incarnation and Inspiration. But the difference between the body, mind and the soul in human nature is thus brought out in an article entitled—"Is there any Difference ?"³

"Is there any difference between the mind and soul ? Their identity and their distinction may be thus indicated. The soul and the mind are one and the same thing : they are substantially the same.

1. 'eevan Veda,' Chapter on 'Inner voice' (*Viveka*) 1882
2. 'Indian Mirror'—23 February 1879
3. 'New Dispensation', Vol. 11, p. 77, 6 Aug 1882

The mind is the soul viewed in its earthly relations, the soul is the mind in its heavenly aspect and spiritual relation. That which thinks and feels and wills is the mind, that which prays, believes and lives in God is the soul. The mind when it crawls on earth is called the mind ; when it soars to heaven it is called the soul or the spirit."

In another place Keshub uses the symbol of the hand¹—the palm, the inner part representing the mind, the outer representing the soul. The inner part turned world-ward can grip things, the outer side turned God-ward, on the contrary, is held in the grip of God, the two together making up human nature. To which part of human nature, then are we to look for the Veda—the word of God, the law divine ? Surely, the soul turned God-ward with its threefold functioning of praying to God, believing in God, and living in God. And Keshub's spiritual autobiography, the *Jeevan Veda*, is concerned with these threefold dynamics of the soul.

In a sermon in Bengali on "Self-Knowledge" (*Atmatattwa*) Keshub says² :—"Whence come the outpourings of worship, of adoration and prayer ? The place whence springs the offerings of worship I call the fount, the reservoir (the *Utsa*). What name does the people of the world give to this fountain, this spring ? They call it variously man, the worshipper, the human soul, but I call it the fountain (*Utsa*). The water that spurts up from this spring has descended from the heights of God-land. The water from

1. G. G. Roy's Anniversary address on Keshub (in Bengali) *Tribidha Janma*, P. 23, 1908
2. 'Acharyer Upadesh' (Bengali Sermons of Keshub) Vol. VII. p. 110
27 Feb. 1876

heaven that comes down by a mysterious channel and slowly accumulates in the reservoir of the soul rises up again."

Here as elsewhere Keshub speaks, again and again, of God's *prior action* on the human soul, filling it with the waters of inspiration which rises up, through the Divine pressure, in the form of worship, adoration and prayer. This process is beautifully described in his address, in English, on "Inspiration".¹

"When the general current of Divine grace descends into the reservoir of the prayerful soul, it ascends again in the shape of higher aspiration and longings ; again it comes down that it may rise again. Observe the process. God acts upon the soul, and the soul acts upon God, and there is action and reaction, again and again. Man cries earnestly for spiritual life, God responds. That response stirs the deepest depths of the heart and we pour forth our sentiments of love and gratitude, and consecrate our energies to God. These are again sent down with greater blessings and increased power, so that the heart is more than ever quickened and sanctified. Thus we gradually ascend from the lowest point of communion to its higher stages till we attain that state of inspiration in which the human will is wholly lost in Divine."

So much for the priority of God's direct action on the soul. It is variously described in religious literature as descent (*abarohana*), as "*prevenance*" by Baron Von Hugel, and as "Providence, general and special" by Keshub. The worshiper is however, not conscious of this priority in the earlier stages of his spiritual life, and thinks that the initia-

1. 'Inspiration,' Jan. 1873 Lectures in India by Keshub

tive is taken by the human soul. Both God's grace and man's efforts co-work for the healthy growth of the human soul, but the priority of Divine Providence is recognized by Keshub. Says¹ he,—

"The double agency, Divine and human is involved in our salvation....He (man) must humbly believe that he does nothing of his own self. He fights in the strength of the Lord. All that he has to do is to surrender himself to God, and then Divine grace works in him and makes him work unto his own salvation. This is the whole secret of the soul's conversion. Here we see not two facts, but one fact, not two forces, one wholly human and the other wholly Divine, but one mighty force in which the Divine and the human are blended together."

Along with *priority* comes the doctrine of *infallibility* in regard to inspiration. For Keshub *Veda* means infallibly true. God's word is truth infallible and every individual should not only bring together the number and instances of such infallibilities experienced, but go on adding to their number as it progresses in spiritual life. In a sermon on "The Doctrine of Infallibility" (*Abhranta Vada*²) Keshub gives an illuminating definition of Veda, and the recognition and place of Veda in one's life.—

"Know as truth the commandment and inspirations of God received as incentive to the higher life. Those instructions from God which you believe to be true, engrave them in indelible characters on stone, and by their side put this inscription,—infallible Veda, infallible word of God, infallible heavenly

1. 'Essays—Theological and Ethical' : 'God's grace and man's efforts,' by Keshub, 20 July 1873
2. *Sevaker Nivedan*, 30 October 1881

inspiration. And when you have thus written down all the infallibilities, all the inspirations and instructions (*adesh n upadesh*) of God, you have your Veda."

Judged by this criterion of infallibility Keshub's spiritual autobiography is a record of Divine inspirations and instructions received by him, and tested by him during twenty-five years of experience. Again and again he declares emphatically that not once during twenty-five years has he been misled or led to doubt the infallibility¹ of Divine inspiration. The subject matter of his *Jeevan Veda* are cardinal principles, fundamental laws of spiritual living, divinely dispensed dynamic processes, eternal and universal truths for himself and for all humanity.

Of the sixteen chapters of this book the last may be taken as a sort of an appendix, an epilogue. Chapter thirteen, fourteen and fifteen describe in terms of well defined types the lineaments of the *Bhakta-yogi*, the ideal man of the New Dispensation. Chapter twelve describes the process involved, the technique evolved and followed. Chapter eleven deals with the victory achieved, the fulfilment. Thus it is the first ten chapters which lay down the divine dynamics of spiritual life, and is the core of the *Jeevan Veda*. Of these the first deals with Prayer (*Prarthana*), and the tenth with Inspiration (*Ascharyaganita*), the inner life, the spiritual life swinging between the two Poles of prayer and Inspiration. Thus the whole may be summed up as the quest of the soul for God and transcendence ending and finding its fulfilment in Inspiration, or God's self-disclosure leading to fuller and fuller self-realization in man. The chapters lying between the first and the tenth are states and stages leading in

1. *Vide Ascharya Ganita*, 1 October 1881 and *Rajyasthapana*, 12 March 1883

progressive spirals from the basic movement of prayer to the culminating point of Inspiration. Prayer and Inspiration, up and down, in and out, to and fro, in how many and various ways is the passage covered from the phenomenal to the noumenal, from objects to mental states and processes and back, preserving a continuity through an alternation of breaks and forging the blazed trail of the Mystic way,—this is Keshub's *Jeevan Veda*.

Here is a passing review of the Chapters. The initial movement of self-awakening leading to praying (*Prarthana*) is the effort of the dependent human soul to follow the first fitful gleams of light, the first strange voice breaking in upon the solitariness of the soul. And as it prays it is given to see, over and above its states of¹ dependence, its sins, its sin-proneness, its "temptedness" (*Papbodha*) as well as the perfectibility of the soul (*Agnimantre Diksha*). All this is the work of faith (*Viswas*) which revealing God and life-eternal in moral law, in conscience, recognised later as God's voiced-will lays the foundation of ethical life, and effectively blocks the path to all pantheistic speculation.

If faith is the lowest hidden strata of foundation, the next strata is detachment (*Vairagya*) or Asceticism completing and reinforcing the fabric of stable moral life (*Niti*) through purificatory purge. In these two movements of the soul we must recognise the place and function of conscience (*Viveka*) or the voiced-will of God, as the "Central axis"², round which inhere and revolve the moral life and on which is to be raised the superstructure of spiritual life. Every birth, every renewal from an old state and status into a new is attended with a break like the cutting off of the umbilical chord or the act of the weaning.

1: 'The Life of Prayer' By Baron F. Von Hugel

2. 'Yoga—Objective and Subjective'—Keshub

Continuity without a break may perpetuate an old type of existence, but cannot help in the emergence of a new type of existence, a variation, a new dispensation. Again and again Keshub insists on periodic detachment (*vairagya*) as the indispensable preliminary condition, the irrefragable law of spiritual growth. For it means a self-stripping, an uncoupling of connections not only with the outer world (*aranyabasa*), but with the inner world, the ego-centred self (*vairagya*), so that the developing soul may stand free of all external authority, of all freightage in the shape of the dogma of books, the symbols and traditions of antiquity, the loyalty to this or that prophet or human mediator (*guru*). This is moral autonomy, spiritual freedom, independence *par excellence* (*swadhinata*). Keshub, however, found his group, constellated round this threefold culture of Faith, Detachment and Conscience, the three 'V's (*Viswas, Vairagya, Viveka*) all austere qualities of the soul comes to a halt showing symptoms of surfeit and exhaustion. A period of dryness, of self-sufficiency, of despair verging on desperation, the mystic's "dark night of the soul" blotting out the Sun, Moon and Stars from the spiritual firmament, follows. Keshub, however, look at this stretch. this dark night of travail as a prelude to a new dawn, the delivery of a new birth, the urge towards further adventure. He attributes the dryness, the desolation to self-love, to self-righteousness, to religious "pride", precipitating spiritual inertia¹; for the soul knows no stopping short of perfection. The remedy prescribed is humility, the teachableness of the learner, faith in God's grace, in loving surrender, in becoming a child again. Keshub calls it the "second call" after the "first call," the reconversion after conversion, *the ordination in bhakii and*

1. 'Faith and Progress of the Brahma Somaj' by P. C. Mozoomdar
(Second Edition)

yoga¹. Thus the translation from *niti* to *bhakti* and *yoga*, from morality to spirituality marks a revolutionary cycle.

This is a critical period in the life of the moral-culturist. His active, self-assertive spirit has to yield before the compulsive character of Divine love. He has to become passive, pliant and humble. Keshub characterizes the advent of *bhakti*² in such passages as these :

"When you are brought into the region of *bhakti* you are given to see how God Himself does everything for you."

"As you press forward you come to a place where you find yourself gripped and pushed forward and you give up your frenzied hold on yourself." "You, who have been strenuously plying the oar, find yourself caught in the drift of a strong current and swept along,"³

"You, who had prided yourself on your aristocratic Brahminhood, you willingly give yourself in service as a Sudra".

"You pass from self-centredness to other-centredness (*Parapratishtita*), from independence to interdependence and enter into group relationship"⁴ (*Dal, Parivar, Mandali, Durbar*). "You see the super-individual, the communitary-nature of the soul (*atmar samajic gathan*) and realize the meaning of "Ten in one" (*Eke das*), of "I and my Brother are one"⁵, of the soul as a social organism, of universal atonement.

1. 'Indian Mirror'—Classification of Devotees 20 Feb. 1876
2. 'Brahmagitopanishad' by Keshub
3. 'Brahmagitopanishad' by Keshub
4. *Acharyer Upadesh*, 1872, 1879
5. 'New Dispensation' articles, Vol. 1, 24 March 1881 P. 3

All these point to the element of feeling, of emotion, of devotion in man being stirred up to meet the advances of God's love (*Bhakti sanchara*)—of the Divine lover. So far God as the True (*Satyam*) has been engaging the attention of the man of faith moulding his life of thinking, feeling and willing, his total being, his whole personality after the pattern and demands of the God of Truth and Justice,—the stern Taskmaster. Now when the entire attention of the believer is switched on to attend to the love of God, the God of love, to God the Good (*Shivam*), and the Holy and the Beautiful (*Shuddham* and *Sundaram*), there is a wrench, a hiatus amounting to a psychic upheaval. This is the way of unmediated *bhakti*. But this interregnum is tided over by an extension of faith and humility. God's love evokes man's loving devotion to God (*bhakti*) transforming and regenerating him like a catalytic agent ending in mystic union or *yoga*. Keshub calls this unitive life of *yoga* the life of the inspired apostle, and the accompanying group-life as the inspired apostolate (*Preriter Durbar*), the life triumphant (*Jayalabha*) in the Kingdom of God on earth (*Prithivite Swargarajya*), the New Dispensation of the age.

Keshub found the climax of the spiritual life in this *hyphenated yoga-bhakti state* inducing the inspired, apostolic life of the *bhakta-yogi* risen anew from the ranks of the "many called" to the "few chosen." Writing¹ on these two aspects of spiritual culture, 'communion (*yoga*) and love (*bhakti*).' the "Indian Mirror" observes :—

"These two which were analytically separated in thought and exercise are entering into each other in the present state of their progressive development, the highest *yoga* and sweetest *bhakti* made

1. Indian Mirror, 5th Sept, 1882

into one. Instead of exclusion and sectarianism, we find as we anticipated, progression and unity. In the Bhagavat Gita we find an attempt to combine these two elements of devotion, but it is more of a philosophical and speculative character. Here, however, in the *Brahmagitopanishad* grouping we see this union, in character and life, and in daily devotion. ...In the union of these two principles is the salvation of the Brahmo Samaj."

And so at the expiration of one year's training on yoga and bhakti (March 1876 to March 1877) Keshub who had charged¹ Gour Govinda Roy to "master the science of unitive life of thought—feeling—willing—communion (*Jnan—Bhakti—Karma—Yoga*)," exhorted him² "to reach the station of the reconciliation of the four Vedas ("*Charī-Veder Milanabhumi*"). What is the focal point of reconciliation but Divine Inspiration (*pratyadesh*)—the highest point of being the human soul can reach but cannot contrive to bring it about ?

Why has Keshub been so keen on defining and laying down the laws of this kind of detachment (*vairagya*) leading to bhakti (loving devotion to God) and yoga (mystic union with God) ? Because all around him he found bhakti wedded to idolatry, incarnationism (*Avataravada*), mediatorship (*Guruvada*), and other superstitious beliefs and practices, and yoga wedded to pantheism, occultism, the inducing of trances and ecstasies and other bye-products and abnormalities of the psychic life. Unmediated love of God, and unmediated mystic union with God, listening to His voice

1. 'Brahmagitopanishad,' Sixth Edition P. 53 'Upanayana'

2. 'Brahmagitopanishad,' 'Sadhak Chatustayer Brata-Udyapanopalakshe.'

8 March 1877

and following His will in one's own life, and remoulding the world after it, led him away not only from these unholy alliances and spurious admixtures, but also from the puerile and perverse divisions and cleavages of anti-yoga bhakta, anti-bhakti yogi, anti-jnani karmi, and anti-karmi jnani. This one-sidedness and perversion he set about to sweep away by giving a new definition of Veda, life and religion, sects and sectarianism. For him the older lines of demarcation, creedal and traditional, ethnic and exclusive, were ruled out as fratricidal and savage survivals. He went to the bed-rock of human nature's¹ many-sidedness and fourfold functioning, and in their total and harmonious working discovered a stable foundation of religious synthesis, spiritual atonement, social solidarity and world-peace. Such a synthesis and such a peace is never a stereotyped and static affair but a perpetual transcending of conflicting points of view through communion and Divine Inspiration in which the whole man with its integral and creative movement fulfils itself and builds² up a new community. "Communion and Community" are Keshub's twin truths.

In his first public utterance in English on "The Destiny of Human Life"³, Keshub says :—

"Man's destiny is to attain God, or make progress unto Him...But this progress must be of the whole life ; we must seek the development of the whole man. All the compartments of life, must advance in the way of truth ; all the powers and sentiments of the mind must be cultivated and developed....

They are the mind, the heart, the soul the will ; the intellectual, the emotional, the devotional, the

1. The Liberal and the New Dispensation 8 Feb. 1884—Article on Keshub'
2. 'Lectures in India'—'Asia's Message to Europe' 1883
3. 'Lectures in India'—'The Destiny of Human Life' 1862

practical. ...It is the progress not of a half, a fourth, a sixth of our life, but of the whole integral life that we are to seek."

How this vision of the individual is carried on into the social order may be seen from his next public lecture on "Social Reformation in India"¹, where he speaks of "the impending social revolution," and of "establishing safeguards of national morality and social peace" through the faith and social programme of the Brahmo Samaj. About a generation after, Krishna Bihari Sen, Keshub's younger brother, and an inspiring interpreter of Keshub's teachings writing about "Assimilation,"² on the results of Keshub's epoch-making programme for a new social order, observes :—

"We have broken the trammels of caste, but at the same time we find that the characteristics of different castes have all come together to form our special character. We are Brahmins in prayers, devotions and religious exercises. We are Kshatriyas in struggles and combats of life. We are Vaishyas in acquiring and spending riches with honesty and moderation, and we are Sudras and Sevakas in serving others."

The two poles and realities—God and man, inspiration and prayer, Divine grace and human effort, there is a difference, however, in their mode of operation. Man's effort is by stages, steps, one at a time, whereas God's mode of working is instantaneous,³ altogether, affecting the whole man and the total personality—a conversion, a transmuta-

1. 'Indian Mirror,' 1 March 1873, P. 63—"Social Reformation in India" by Keshub
2. 'The Liberal and the New Dispensation,' 8 Feb. 1885 P. 6. 'Assimilation' K. B. Sen
3. 'New Dispensation,' Vol. 1. P. 210—11 Aug. 1881,—'Heavenly Moment and the Infernal Hour'

tion. The two may be said to work in reverse order. The ascending order of man is knowing, feeling willing, where as the descending order of God may be said to be willing, feeling, knowing. Is that why Christ said,—“Do the will of God and you will know it”? Is that why Keshub said—“There is a deep meaning in the popular saying, the Veda is superior to Brahma.”¹ (*Brahmer hoite Veda baro.....ikar gurah artha ache*), or again, “First comes the worship of God’s will, then comes worship of ² God Himself,” (*“age Brahma ichcha puja, pare Brahmer puja ?”*)

Born on the snowy heights of the Himalayas, at Darjeeling in a moment of startled self-recognition the *Jeevan Veda* is like my enraptured vision of the heavenly released Ganges born on the snowy heights at Gangotri sweeping along to Gangasagar. Like this mountain stream sculpturing its way through hard rocks and stony beds it goes through its drill of austere moral culture, generating under the divine pressure of bhakti, a passion of spiritual beneficence healing and blessing humanity till it loses itself in the ocean of yoga eternal. Primitive folk-lore loves to picture the Ganges as being sent down from its heavenly home to redeem the submerged race of man. I firmly believe in the prophetic message and mission of Keshub’s *Jeevan Veda* towards the emergence of new humanity. The title is an unique coinage in Bengali. There is an echo of it in that classic *mantra*, “Thou art the Veda” (*Vedosi Twam*) said to be whispered thrice into the ear of every new-born child in Hindusthan, for the *Jeevan Veda* teaches that a New Veda, a New Bible begins with every man, woman, and child. And so, too, in the modern scientist’s declaration of the existence in crys-

1. ‘*Sevaker Nivedana*’, 9 Oct. 1891—‘*Dwividha Nastikata*,’ P. 76.
(Bengali Sermons of Keshub of later period)

2. ‘*Acharyer Prarthana*.’ (Bengali) 16 Feb. 1876,—‘*Ichcha Vinash karo*

talline solids of sound waves, having frequency measured in millions and millions of vibrations per second. Here is an echo of Keshub's vision of the soul, as *Veda*, as *Vangmaya*,—the formless receiver and transmitter of the perpetually desponded and eternally vibrating word of God. I have, therefore, rendered the title *Jeevan Veda* as "Life—Its Divine Dynamics."

Jammotsava, Dav

19 November 1955

"Sudev Sadan"

J. K. Koar

150, Sindhi Housing Society,
Chembur, Bombay—71.



Acharya Keshub Chunder Sen
Delivering 'Jeevan Veda' from the Pulpit of the
Bharatvarshiya Brahma Mandir.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

PRAYER : A VOICE CALLING

Many days have gone by since the supreme worth of the sacred volume—Life—was first expounded from this pulpit. Of all books the Book of Life is the very best ; and the life of the man of faith, of the trainee-spiritual, novitiate undergoing a course of training surpasses all. Of all things the most precious is one's own life. Since the Lord of the Universe has made man's life His masterpiece,—superior to all scriptures and philosophies (*the Vedas and Vedantas*), it behoves every man of faith to recount his life-story before a spiritual assembly. Therefore, by the command of the Heavenly Father, I shall now discourse on the gospel of my life. Invoking the name of Him, the Ruler of the Universe, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Gods, and making my obeisance to His lotus-like feet, I enter upon this pleasant and delightful task.

The first word of the gospel of my life is Prayer. When no one had come to my help, when I had not entered any religious community as a member, when I had not adopted any form of faith as my own by studying critically the various religions, when I had not taken my admission into the order of saints or novitiates, at that dawn of my religious life, there surged up in my heart an impulse, a voice crying—'pray pray.' I did not know then what religion was ; no one had shown me the way to any religious association, or told me who could be a spiritual preceptor (*guru*), nor had any one come forward to accompany me in the dangers and

perils of the way of life. At that crisis of my life, like the first rays of the rising sun, the words,—‘pray, pray, there is no other way but prayer’ kept repeating within me. I did not fully understand why and for what I should pray; nor had I time to argue the point in my own mind. There was no one whom I could ask why I prayed; nor did I enquire of any one as to who enjoined on me to pray. No suspicion arose in my mind that I might be mistaken. Pray, I did. At the time of laying the foundation who gives any thought to the beautifying of the mansion or to the colouring of the portico? For, it is the time to give oneself wholly to the work of laying the foundation.

“Pray, thou shalt be saved, thy character shall improve, thou shalt receive whatsoever thou lackest”, these are the words which used to reverberate from all sides,—from the east to the west, from the north to the south of my life. I became a votary of this one idea, this one business became my sole occupation. Prayer is man’s spiritual preceptor, the never-failing helper of the helpless. This preceptor alone I came to know; this preceptor alone was I intimate with; I knew no one else. I had no friend in religion. I would lift up mine eyes to the skies but heard nought of any divine dispensation nor did I comprehend any religious doctrine. I never gave any thought as to whether I should go to the church, or the mosque, or the temple, or join the Buddhist Order. From the very first I betook myself to prayer, to that supplication before God, which is superior to the *Veda* and the *Vedanta*, to the *Quran* and the *Purana*.

I am a man of faith. I put my intuitions of faith to the test of reason, and rise to greater heights of faith. Once I put my faith in a thing I am not shaken again. I scrutinize and by way of testing my observation I ask myself—‘Is it

all right ?” and the answer comes, “Yes, go ahead”, and I proceed. I commenced the practice of prayer by writing it out, one in the morning, and one at night. Gradually I passed on from dawn to morning, and thence to the light of the advancing day. The four quarters which were immersed in darkness cleared up. Houses, roads and landings all became visible. By continuing in the practice of prayer I began to acquire strength—the strength as that of a lion,—illimitable and irresistible. Lo ! I had no longer the old body, no more the old spirit. What power now in my words, what power in my resolves ! No sooner said than done, no sooner resolved than fulfilled ! I shook my fists at sin and I prayed. Doubt, unbelief, sin and temptation,—to all these I would present a grim, determined front. Every evil fled from me when I threatened to pray. Thus, as with child-like importunity I sat, a suppliant, at the feet of the Deity I would always get something from Him. Did I need anything ? Who was to give ? Did I want to go somewhere ? Who was to show the way ? Who was to drive my sins away ? In all things prayer was my helper. My one and only treasure at that time was prayer ; on it alone I depended. I looked up to prayer to bring me happiness. For help of any kind I appealed to prayer. As people say of an only child, “He is my all, my only sapphire”, (*nilmani*), so was prayer my only wealth.

Brethren, I had only this supreme helper, prayer. What books should be read ? What subjects should be discussed ? To whom should I go ? I knew not at all. If Providence had not reduced me to such straits, I fear, I could not have acquired such a faith in prayer. If any one censured me I would close my eyes and say,—“Prayer, where art thou ? Come to me in this hour of trial.” I did not know my mother tongue so well as to be able to pray in proper form.

But I could not check the flow of thoughts and feelings that came in a rush. Sitting by the window I would say a word or two with my eyes open. Even this brought me abundant joy. Priceless treasure was received in a moment. But the question was, having received the treasure, to whom to offer it? To whom to pass it on? Thus passed my time in those days. That is the reason why I love prayer so much. Brethren, ye are my friends, but prayer is a far greater friend to me, though invisible, him I know to be my friend indeed. Perhaps, more than any of you here I am in greater debt to prayer, for there was a time when I had no other friend but prayer.

I knew for certain that to pray is inevitably to hear something in return. Thus from the very beginning the doctrine of inspiration (*adesh*) was ingrained in my heart. What religion shall I embrace? Prayer answered the question. Should I give up working in an office or become a preacher of religion, a missionary? Prayer dictated the answer. How shall I regulate my relations with my wife? Prayer settled the point. How far should I be involved in money matters? Prayer laid down the rules. I did not then give much thought to the doctrine of inspiration. But this much I knew that to pray was to get an answer; whosoever wanted to see and hear, heard and saw. My understanding became so illumined by praying that it seemed I had just come out from the University after a ten years' course in logic, philosophy, the sciences and other abstruse subjects. The Lord said to me,—“Thou shalt have no books, nor aught else; do thou keep praying.” After saying my prayer I would invariably wait for His inspiration (*adesh*). “Why hast Thou not told me if I should give up secular work? Why hast thou not let me know how I am to settle this or that affair?” By and by, I joined the Brahmo Samaj, strove after

spiritual life, became an ordained missionary, and commenced preaching, —all these and more came to pass.

It is because I believe in prayer that my life is what it is, that I can make out how deplorable is the spiritual state of my friends. Self-deception in the matter of prayer should be driven out from our community. He is a deceiver who having prayed waits not for an answer. He whose inner state and outer expressions do not tally, who talks over much, who does not keep his mind collected during prayer is a deceived. The prayerful state of the soul is very difficult to attain. He who allows himself to drift with the flow of words is a deceiver, a hypocrite. He who in the afternoon forgets what he had said in his prayer in the morning; he who cannot recall, when questioned on Tuesday, what he had prayed for on the previous Sunday, is a deceiver. He who prays for wealth or honour or for worldly good, whose prayer is ninety-eight per cent for spiritual gain and two per cent for worldly gain, or ninety-nine parts for the former and one part for the latter, is a deceiver in the matter of prayer. I have learnt from experience that he who in the course of his prayer, begs even for a pie for worldly ends, his whole prayer will be unavailing. Therefore, keep your prayers pure and unadulterated; and in the end you will inherit the whole earth, yea, this world as well as the world to come!

As by the simple process of adding up one, two, three and four you may arrive at the total correctly, so the laws of prayer can be proved to be as infallibly true as the rules of arithmetic. I can prove that by prayer I have got what I did not have, and that I did not occupy the place that I do now. Hence, it is that I tell my friends over and over again that the most favourable times and state for prayer is when a person is in distress on account of some illness.

in the family, for some calamity or some pecuniary troubles. In times of adversity prayer wells up spontaneously and unceasingly. If a man in his hour of distress can ask God with a smiling face,—“Lord, I have nothing to complain, teach me asceticism in the midst of these circumstances,” then no sooner has he prayed than he attains blessedness here and hereafter. The petitioner shall seek only spiritual good, but all things else shall be given to him. In times of domestic dissensions, or disputes over doctrines God’s children should resort only to prayer. And as soon as they return after saying their prayers they will find peace and harmony established. Hence, I ask my friends to have recourse to prayer only. But they do it not and so they suffer.

I have now narrated to you the first lesson of my life. Knowing what a precious treasure prayer is, I offer it my loving homage. May all mankind knowing prayer to be dearer than wife and children, the repository of spiritual wisdom, and recognising it as the essential thing in life and religion, love and honour it.

CHAPTER II

SIN-AWARENESS : *THE VOICE* *STIRRING UP STRIFE*

The assembled devotees asked,—“What is the next theme ?” The first was prayer ; what is the second chapter of the book of life ? Hear, ye devotees, the second theme also relates to a very important matter. As in the first, so in this also you will notice a vast difference between myself and others. My sin-awareness is very strong ; it is not so strong in others. My sin-awareness was not derived from a critical enquiry into what sin is, and what constitutes sin. My sin-awareness arose from the sight of sin ; instantly and intuitively I became aware of sin. In the state of mind-I am speaking of, no second person appeared as a spiritual preceptor to make me aware of sin. I became the most uncompromising witness of my own sins. My heart constantly cried, “I am a sinner,” “I am a sinner.” If on waking up in the morning my heart said anything, it was this one refrain,—“I am a sinner.” Morning, forenoon, afternoon, all the eight watches of day and night, as long as I remained awake, this sin-awareness never left me. In the vocabulary of the world, theft, robbery, misappropriation of others’ property are called sins. In my vocabulary sin is sloth ; it is weakness, it is a morbid condition, it is a disease, it is proneness, to sin,—the possibility to commit sinful acts. I did not stop by calling the actual commission of an act to be a sin, but I have looked with feelings of horror upon the possibility of committing sin.

I did not search for the meaning of this word in any dictionary ; I did not coin it. It was revealed to me when

the divine light of conscience flashed upon my heart, and I beheld more than a hundred, nay, more than a thousand infinitesimally small things, some subtle, some gross,—sloth, weakness, worldly attachments and what not,—all present there.

All these lay hidden within the soul in such a manner that if the light of conscience had not flashed thereon nothing would have been perceived. As the gas-light in this house of worship occasionally bursts into a blaze, so did the light of conscience flare up within me. And I saw I was full of sin, sin and nothing else. As long as there is the body, there are in it the roots of lust, anger and other sins. When I say this, I must also tell you that I do not believe in the doctrine which ascribes man's birth to sin. I do admit that man is born with the possibility of committing sin.

When bodily propensities are present the root of sin is also *there*. I may commit sin. What sins? I may tell a lie; I may steal. How may I steal? If the sight of another's wealth begets in me a desire to possess it, or if even for a minute the thought occurs,—“I wish it were mine, not his,”—that would be stealing. How may I tell a lie? If at any time my life be at stake I may, though I am not sure, tell a lie. Even if I do not tell a lie, I may say something which, while not a downright lie, may produce a false impression in the mind of those who hear it. Am then a liar? Yes, not in spoken words but in thought. Am I then a thief? Yes, not in deed, but at heart. Similarly, if I consider myself better than I really am, I am guilty of the sin of pride, of vanity. If it strikes me even for a moment that I am more learned than you are, I commit a sin. If at heart I love myself more and others less, if I seek my comfort more than that of others, I am guilty of the sin of selfishness. Thus I see within me so many shapes of sin,

of varying sizes and properties, that they really look as if they were so many worms of hell squirming and wriggling. I am sure that even now I commit no less than a hundred sins a day. Were I to count the number of sins I have committed in this life, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that I have committed a million sins during these forty-four years. My sin-awareness is so poignantly keen that the mind will detect immediately even the smallest of sins. And this sin-awareness brings mental torture. My sin-awareness is so unsparring as if it were an avowed enemy of my lower self as it has been deputed to enumerate the sins of some one else than those of its own. From morn to eve it is occupied with ticking off sins the whole time,—here selfishness, there covetousness, now wounded vanity, then the desire to tell a lie, next greed for money, again, seeking my own happiness in preference to others ; and so on. The counting continues, night follows eve but still it knows no end.

This counting is not an affair of the intellect but of emotion ; it is of the heart and it smarts, it hurts. It is not merely that reason passes its judgment, —“so much pride is not right, such selfishness is wrong”. No, the arguments of the rationalists have no weight with me. The plain truth is, that sin-awareness brings instant pain and torment. Just as a spider, feeling by instinct, seizes a fly the moment it settles somewhere on its big cobweb, so can the spirit instantly feel and detect a sin the moment it impinges itself on the network of spiritual nerves, if I may so call it. If there is present anywhere in life a disturbing thought, a sin of omission or of commission, a precept of religion violated, a weakness permitted, the ever-vigilant mind instantly perceives it. And perceiving, exclaims,—“Aha ! what of all these possibilities of evil within, hidden from the cons-

cious mind, camouflaged ? So thou mayest be tempted to become a *dacoit*, or fall a prey to greed at the sight of millions, or covet what belongs to others ?" This enumeration of sins, how comprehensive and far reaching can I make it ? Like unto the river Ganges, like unto the sea, yea like unto the vast ocean ! What more shall I say ? There is no sin in the catalogue of sins that I may not commit. If the very possibility of wrong doing does not cease, then sin continues to exist. Hence, I do not readily reckon any man to be holy. Hence also no one, up to this day, has succeeded in shaming me by calling me a sinner ; nor is it likely any one ever will. How can you shame a man who says he has kept count of fifty thousand sins in himself, and can call each one of them by name ? Is it not as unavailing as accusing a man, just returned from committing a robbery, of stealing a pie ? Accuse a dacoit of stealing a pie, and he will laugh at you saying,—“what a ridiculous charge to bring against me !” To call him a sinner, whose sin-awareness perceives sin filling every nook and corner of his being, is surely not a severe accusation or violent abuse. So if you call me a sinner, it will not be an accusation but may serve as a corrective.

Adamantine is my conscience ; terrible is its cutting power. It can probe sin to the bottom, and having perceived it in all its bearings, it sets about to excise it. Directly a sin is committed, my conscience detects it. If in performing an act of charity I exceed, even by a hair's breadth, the bounds of justice, I find no peace by day or by night. The sense of justice, fully awake, sits enthroned in my heart. If there be only a day's delay in paying the servant his wages, conscience at once exclaims,—“Sinner, thou art guilty of unjust conduct”. If I plead saying,—“I could not pay to-day, I shall pay to-morrow”, conscience upbraids me,—

"How couldst thou eat to-day ? A man of means, thou hast plenty to fill thyself with, but what of the poor servants whose dues thou hast not paid ?" What terrible injustice ! I leave Calcutta and go to a suburban garden (at Belghoria). I quit travelling on land and try a river-trip by boat, but conscience would on no account leave persecuting me. An answer has to be given, but I can give none. The Court of Small Causes is always open within my heart. I am heavy-laden because of my sins. You may ask,—“Do you commit so many sins ? You who belong to the New Dispensation ? You have so many sins hidden within ?” Well, brethren, see, such is the man you hold in reverence ! And you neither see his true state nor know it !

Great, indeed, is my anguish and pain ; but blessed be God, that I see very few on earth as supremely happy as I am. The worms of hell are wriggling within, so, that I find sin in my tongue, in my eyes, and in my ears. But what is the outcome of it all ? They lead to spiritual gain, to a blessed state. Had it not been for this sin-awareness, I could not have come here (the Brahmo Samaj). I would not have continued to stay here. My living hell is the cause of my living heaven. In the unhealthy state of the body it is not easy to locate the seat of disorder, of pain or of burning sensation, and the disease is not readily detected ; but in a healthy body if any part is affected, it is immediately perceived and located. This immediate perception is, indeed a good sign, a healthy symptom of the body as well as of the mind. From this perception of sin proceeds prayer and the desire for communion with God. If only ten sins were possible, and if the inducements to sin were only ten, I would have thought, when I had overcome them, that there was no saint on earth like me. I would have considered that as I have attained perfection nothing else remains to be achieved,

But every month, every day, my conscience begets ever new awareness of sin, and points out to me new ways of improvement. My mental state is like unto the man who smarting from a burning sensation in the body is driven from one cold pool to another to find relief. Thus day in and day out, I, too, toss and writhe restlessly in mental anguish because of sin. But added to the burden of sin was that of doubt and unbelief. Is God present here? Is Jesus living? Shall I see the face of Sri Chaitanya? As soon as such questionings arose, some one said, "Thou unbelieving soul, it is preposterous; not see the face of Sri Chaitanya, not see the dancing figure of Gouranga (Sri Chaitanya)? Jesus, not living?" This was enough to make my guilty soul suffer. But God would not let me off so easily. I was driven from city to city till eventually I arrived at the City of Peace (*Shantipur*), and there in the sanctum of peace my mind was set at rest. I cried out in relief,—“Ah, the fiery ordeal is over at last!” Can any one who has never fallen ill know the value of health? Can any one who has not suffered from poverty realise the pleasures of possessing wealth? I have experienced sorrow, I have also experienced the joy of deliverance from sorrow.

With every tick of the clock some one tells me: “Thou hast attained nothing, nothing at all.” As one whips a horse, so does this inner voice keep lashing me. The wonder of it is that I weep, and again I rejoice. As much as I weep so much do I rejoice. I weep bitterly. I rejoice exceedingly. If by taking medicine health can be restored, who will not take that medicine? Hence, I repeatedly tell my friends, “You are sinful; you are slothful; you are culpable.” But it seems as if I have been repeating the multiplication table to them, for no one gives heed to my words. Don’t you know, my friends, that you are sinners? Your idea of sin is

opposed to that of mine. What I call a dreadful sin is just sin to you ; what I call a sin is only a fault to you ; what I call a fault, is to you only an error of judgment. From the expression of your face I can make out that you are not labouring under the torment of sin. He who is tormented cannot put on an air of light-heartedness ; neither can he sit idle. You consider you were sinners at one time but now you are not, and that you have become saints. It means that you shut your eyes to the high ideal of the New Dispensation. It means that salvation is coming to mean no more than it does to the Christians, to the Buddhists or to many others besides.

As for me I find that I do not stand fully acquitted before the Lord. The sinner who is now occupying this pulpit (referring to himself) is the greatest sinner in the Brahmo Samaj. This is not rhetoric, not poetry, but sober truth : my own self bears witness to this truth. There are few sinners like me on this earth. I am full of sins. That which counts as one sin to others is a fivefold sin to me. That which you do not recognize as a sin at all is sin to me. The standard by which others will be judged is not that by which I shall be judged for my sins. Therefore, whenever I think of God in His role as the Great Judge, my whole frame shudders. If my words lack ever so little in sweetness, the judge is heard within admonishing,—“How is it that thy words are not sweet ? Why can’st thou not speak words of heavenly sweetness unto all ?” If I say anything savouring of harshness, I at once suffer torment. I would suffer day and night, I would suffer for days together at a time. I am enjoined not only to be truthful but also to be sweet in speech. If I look with disfavour on any one, it begins to prey on my mind. Is even a momentary scowl, then, an offence ? Yes, to the man of the New Dispensation

it is a serious offence. Therefore, I adjure them who occupy positions of trust in the New Dispensation to get themselves purged of their faults. You say adultery is a sin. But I say how reprehensible if one evinces even a little undue attachment to woman-kind, or is inordinately fond of woman's company. You say stealing is a sin ; I say, it had been held so even in Moses' time. But a new code has come to us. Are you much occupied with the thought of money ? How deplorable ! Are you still engrossed in worldly affairs ? Do not know that it is an abomination to be so occupied ? Even during the five minutes set apart for meditation you steal a few moments to think of how you will feed your children, or whence will your money come ? Are you getting over-anxious, and thinking of the morrow ? All this is stealing in the new code.

May sin-awareness greatly increase in us. You know what sin is ; and you know that virtue or holiness is a better thing than sin. If with sin-awareness pain, anguish and sorrow comes, let them come. Our compassionate Mother has so ordained that happiness shall come in the wake of suffering. If quinine or some other specific for fever is at hand, let fever come if it must. If awareness of sin bring on suffering that itself will lead to happiness. What can sorrow do when I have known the Lord of Yoga (mystic union), when I have experienced the joy of communion ? Why shall we fear suffering even unto death when heavenly joy and happiness will surely follow ? Hence is it that I no more ask, who is greater—God, the Lord of Life Eternal or *Yama*—the Lord of Death ! It is true that thousands of sins beset us, but millions of remedies are at hand. Millions upon millions of Satan shall I destroy in an instant. He who has consecrated his life to the Divine Mother, how can he have any fear of sin ? Satan has no power over him. Friends,

if I have spoken to you of the dark side of life, of darkness, I have also spoken to you of the brighter side of life. If you have sinned, let your soul be in travail, and as you suffer its agonies, the Goddess of Peace will come unto you and give you peace and rest !

CHAPTER III

FIRE OF ENTHUSIASM

THE VOICE URGING EVER ONWARD

The third chapter of the gospel of my life is initiation into the cult of fire (enthusiasm). If I ask, "My soul, in what mystic word were you initiated in the early years of religious life?"—it answers,—*"In the fiery cult of enthusiasm."* From my boyhood I am a votary of the cult of fire. I am an advocate of the doctrine of the fiery enthusiasm. I regard the fiery state of the soul as a determinant of salvation. What is this cult of fire? To know what coldness is one must know what warmth is; to know the creed of coldness, therefore, one has to know the cult of fire. I have observed that in many lives you meet with coldness but no fire; in others with fire but no coldness. Many are of a cold temperament; inwardly placid, outwardly inactive; their conduct betrays extreme coldness. Movements slow, speech devoid of fire, lack-lustre eyes, and heart scarcely stirred by the passion of enthusiasm,—when I find these characteristics I conclude the type to be predominantly cold. There are many in this world who practise coldness like the observance of a vow. They move sluggishly, work languidly; and when they conclude their devotional exercises, they do it tamely; they look for quiet places; and spend their lives in a quiescent atmosphere. They want to practise that *yoga* (mystic union) which is of a cold, passionless kind, and the salvation they look for is of the same kind. Even in heaven they hope to live in a cool corner in a quiet way. If, in this world, fire and water are both placed before them, they turn away from fire and eagerly take to water. If heavenly fire and water are offered to them they look to—

wards water with hope and devout love, and long for the day when it would be given them. If coldness be the dominant mood, it enervates man's nature, it weakens his moral stamina. Vigour, if there be any in him, dissolves into langour, power is reduced to impotence ; energy, virility all flag and fail. Water pours in to extinguish all his fire ; cowardice swallows up his courage, compliance and tolerance, drive away, one by one, energy, enthusiasm and all the aggressive virtues. They who desire nothing but coldness come to give up all religious activities and sink into supine ease. Getting inordinately fond of rest and quietistic piety men of the predominantly cold type become enfeebled by degrees. They will not go the way where they may have to face sorrow and suffering, and prefer to hide themselves where they can be safe from all fear, and enjoy undisturbed rest.

Whatsoever you find opposed to all this is fire ; everything which is the reverse of all this will be found in the life in which fire predominates. In my life from the beginning uptill now this fire of enthusiasm and energy has been continually burning. It is not that this fire manifests itself in the form of temporary heroism, neither does it show itself by fits and starts. In the dictionary of religion it is written, "Heat means life and its opposite cold means death." If the body becomes quite cold, physicians conclude that death has ensued ; the moment they find all fire, all warmth gone, they declare that the spark of life is extinct. In the spiritual life, too, absence of heat spells death. For this reason from my early life I have been an advocate of fire. In the cult of fire was my initiation, and my heart trembles if I find the slightest coldness in me.

As by touching the body it can at once be ascertained whether there is life in it or not, so also it can be ascertained at a glance whether the soul is living or dead. It rather

takes time to know whether I am a sinner or not but it is very easy to determine whether I am dead or alive. How ? By the feel of warmth or coldness. Hence, I pray and go through spiritual exercises, so that my soul may ever remain full of fire and vigour. Because fire holds in itself energy, life, therefore do I welcome it, embrace it and love it passionately. The sign of fire anywhere fills me with hope, joy and enthusiasm. If I find the fire in someone's life losing its intensity I infer that he will presently perish by plunging into water. If I find anybody cooling down after five years of sustained enthusiasm, I take it for granted that he is going the way to sin, and death will presently come and seize him by the neck. For this reason I used to regard the state of coldness to be a state of unholiness. If any morning I got up from bed without being initiated afresh in the cult of fire, I considered it was death to me. Hell and coldness I regarded as identical. Therefore, I kept the fire of enthusiasm constantly burning around me both in matters concerning my own spirit as well as of society in which I move. "I have offered my services to one group of men, when shall I get together another group to serve ? I have built up ten organisations ; when shall I get together ten more ? I have worked in one department ; when shall I work in another ? I have made the acquaintance of one set of men ; when shall I make the acquaintance of another set ? I have compiled truths from certain scriptures, lest by confining myself to these alone they grow old and stale my constant endeavour has been how to gather more truths by studying other scriptures ? Such were my aspirations, and such my endeavours, and this is what I mean by a state of fire, or warmth, to be continually after new ideas, new acquirements, and new sources of joy and happiness.

I am always running in new directions, along new pathways. The new is invariably charged with energy, full of

warmth, the old invariably means cold. I have seen godly Brahmos and distinguished youths who came to their death when their avocations became dull and their studies stale. How many were there full of energy and enthusiasm, at one time who sinned not, committed no murder, but at last succumbed to death through coldness. How many Brahmos practised asceticism for a long time from whom, when their fire was quenched, the world took its toll of worldliness with compound interest, till at last covetousness claimed them as its victim. How many enthusiastic youths there were who, while working for this or that party, in this or that field and village, got themselves lost, not to be found again. Many were once heroic spirits but are now grown so cold that they not only give out no warmth but themselves dying, they carry coldness to other lives, causing their death. I am always on my guard lest my hands and feet become cold, my eyes lack lustre, and my heart void of enthusiasm. Whenever I noticed a little coldness or oldness coming on, I said to myself,—“What am I to do now? My duties and labours are growing old and stale, my worship cold and formal.” And I cried unto my God,—“Save thy child from this predicament.” As I prayed I made preparations for a spiritual fire ceremony, feeding the fire with the fuel that would cause it to blaze. Then, while calling again and again on God,—the Fire of fire, the Immanent Fire, I beheld with awe fire floating on rivers and seas, blazing upon the mountains, fire animating even the human frame. With this vision new and startling truths flashed from all sides.

Am I a sinner only when I tell lies? No, certainly, not. If my worship begets coldness, if my words make my hearers faint-hearted and dispirited, then also am I a grievous sinner; for I have not come to pour the poison

of coldness upon the earth. If I become extremely unconcerned and inactive, it will bring ruin not only on myself but on many others. If the heat is not kept constant, ruin may result. Therefore, I strive to lead a life of strenuous activity keeping my hope and faith in all their freshness and vigour. Whenever I feel coldness coming in I infer that lust, deceitfulness and hypocrisy also are coming in its train, and that already I am lying on the bed of sin. If on entering the house of prayer in the morning I see only water, I know the day's devotions will be death to me. If I have no mind to enter into meditation, if the words as they are uttered one by one, carry no force and power with them, then I know that heat has departed, and it is all an affair of death. If while seated in the office doing my work, I find there is no zest in me, I should conclude I am not doing the Master's work, but serving death. That is why from the very beginning I greatly prized the cult of fire. I know that in the assembly of believers there prevails a spirit of quietism ; but be it a fault or virtue, I have always been fond of warmth, of enthusiasm. It is not in my nature to be inactive ; as for hiding myself somewhere away from my community is, in a way, impossible. I have covered myself up in a mantle of fire from head to foot. Filled with this spirit have I served, laboured, taken to meditation and other devotional exercises. I have also experienced what it is to have God-vision in solitude ; I have been engaged in all kinds of occupation, but I deem it my good fortune that I have not lost my life by falling into the sink of coldness.

Those who are cold by temperament are apt to be timid ; and they run away after following a course of religious training for five or ten years. Coldness is such a pernicious

state that it extinguishes fire outright. If you want to find out whether there is warmth or coldness in you, you have only to discover whether there is or is not activity and enthusiasm. If you find that you are no longer disposed to exert yourself much, that you no longer take delight in work, that you are no more eager to join others in chanting hymns (*sankirtans*), then send for a physician at once, for you are on the point of dying. You, devotees of the Living God, how can you be devoid of fervour and enthusiasm in your silent communion (*dhyan*), or the fire and zest in your religious activities? It must never be so. May your tongue never utter words of cold despair. As warmth in the hands and feet reveals the symptoms of life in the body, so also warmth in work, thought, hope, faith, words and vows is a sign of spiritual life and vitality. There should be so much fire in you that at the mere touch heat will pass from your fingers to mine. There should be so much fire even in an old man of eighty that as words fall from his lips they will electrify millions of souls; so that when men draw near they will exclaim, "Eighty years old, and still what fire in him!" Every one of us should have a like measure of energy, enthusiasm, warmth and fire. Let us fervently call on Him Who is the Giver of Enthusiasm and Life, Him who is the Fire of fire, the Eternal Fire. Let our tongue utter only fire, fire, fire, and let our heart ever keep reciting this mystic word,—FIRE!

O, Infinite Mercy, God of Fire! Worldliness has caused many a well to be sunk on this earth and lies in wait for its prey. At the first opportunity it seizes men, hurls them into these and drowns them. O, Mother Divine, so long as we have warmth, enthusiasm in the soul, we are Thine. But if worldliness throws us into the cold water of its well, we can no longer retain our heat, we can no more:

live our religion, and, then, coldness begins its work of destructions. O, God of Love, infuse more fire into my thoughts, words and deeds, so that I may not fall, untimely, into the jaws of death-in-the-form-of-coldness. It is my great good fortune that I still continue to call Thee my Mother, that towering pillars of blazing fire still keep burning on either side of me. Thou didst initiate me early in life in the cult of fire; therefore, I still continue to worship Thy holy feet in sickness and sorrow, in danger and difficulties. I still sing the song of Thy name and dance with my friends and companions. How many had come along with us who gave proofs of diverse gifts of the spirit, but most of whom have since run away. Had'st Thou not initiated me in the cult of fire, I would have called Thee the God of the old dispensation, and not the God of the New Dispensation. Thou hast saved me by Thy gift of enthusiasm. When thou didst find everything getting old, Thou didst send Thy mighty New Dispensation. When all the little lights were about to go out, Thou didst kindle a blazing gaslight. The cry, "Glory, Glory be unto Thee" burst forth from the lips of thy worshippers, They gained a lease of another hundred years, and all despair and dread vanished. O God of Dispensation, in place of a solitary musical instrument, I set up an orchestra of a hundred, and went on singing Thy praises. When the roads and landings of this country were looking dull and deserted, when the younger generation was becoming spiritless, inactive and dumb, when numbers of Brahmo brothers and sisters, bereft of all enthusiasm were forsaking the path of religion and plunging into worldliness, then in order to protect Thy religion, O infinite Mercy and Bestower of enthusiasm, Thou didst, in the midst of every untoward circumstance, light up with fire all the

roads and landing of this country. Thou didst so inspire the muted tongue that palsied organ began to speak words of fire. Again did I behold Thee in trees and creepers, in the affairs of the world, yea, this time, in water as well, not to speak of fire. Even as I thought myself well-nigh dead and gone I was saved once more, Thou didst not suffer me to grow old. Inspired by new energy and enthusiasm, I rose up and lived again. Even without committing any sin, I would have been spiritually dead; without being a veritable liar and a fraud, I would have met with death at the hands of worldliness. But now what a change; what maddening enthusiasm do I see among the devout apostles in processional singing everywhere. Glory, be unto Thee. Thou hast given us such an ever-renewing religion that there is not the least sign of abatement in any one's enthusiasm. Nor can I conceive that any one accepting such a faith as this New Dispensation can ever perish for lack of strength and zeal. The New Dispensation knows no death; nor any coldness whatsoever. All this has come about, not through any merit of mine or that of my brethern, but solely through Thy grace. Never again shall we lack enthusiasm. Such a dance shall we dance as will never cease. The glorious privilege that we have gained of calling Thee by the name of Mother will never cease. The body is burnt to ashes in the funeral pyre, and its fire goes out; but the fire of the spirit can never be put out. If any one can fill his body and mind with the fire that is God, he will find that that fire can never become extinct. What a fire hast Thou lit,—the fire of faith, of love and of *bhakti* (*exuberant love of God*). These fires shall keep death away. May I live hugging this fire to my heart. Bless me that I may live my life immersed in this happiness.

Initiate me into that vow everlasting, that enthusiasm undying that nothing can quench. Inspire me with the spirit of fiery enthusiasm so that I may dance to its tune. Make me dance the dance that never ceases. Light such a fire that never goes out. At Thy feet, Loving Father do pray for this blessed gift.

CHAPTER IV

DETACHMENT FROM NON-EGO (WORLD) AND EGO : *THE VOICE AND 'BREAKS'*

The fourth chapter is sojourn in the wilderness, and asceticism, that is,—detachment towards the inner ego, and the outer world (or non-ego). The occasion of entering the world (the married house holder's state) was for me like entering the cremation-ground. God had ordained that the way to the garden of happiness was death to me ; and such it came to be. The highly skilled Heavenly Artist who portrayed the lineaments of my character, first painted the entire ground in deep black ; and on that intensely dark background He went on limning various patterns in bright glowing colours. He is still engaged in portraying me. Set off against the dark background, the beauty of the picture shines all the more.

Grief, affliction and asceticism—these became the starting point of my spiritual life. God knows how the dark cloud of asceticism hung over my life from the very beginning. The first faint quickenings of religious life made themselves felt when I was eighteen, though I had abstained from taking animal food when I was fourteen. Who advised me to be a vegetarian ? Who told me that animal food was forbidden ? One spiritual preceptor I knew ; one master alone I obeyed ; I called Him conscience—the Inner Voice. Only one word did conscience speak to the boy and he made his renunciation. Thus at the age of fourteen asceticism first quickened into being in me. Then as the religious spirit began to develop, and devotional exercises were

undertaken, I found refuge at the feet of the Lord. As my spiritual fervour increased in intensity and I began praying in earnest, the cloud which was no bigger than a finger in the firmament of my young life and which was confined to and culminated in the single act of abstention from animal food, that cloud thickened and overspread my life. It became so black and dense that it saddened my heart and darkened my face, so much so that I had no peace by day and no rest at night. All sorts of pleasures incident to youth I shunned as poison. To amusements I said,—“Thou art satan, thou art sin.” To worldly enjoyment I said, “Thou art hell, whose resorts to thee falls into the jaws of death.” To my body I said,—“Thou art the way to hell, I will subjugate thee, else thou wilt lead me to death.” I knew not then what religion was, I only knew that to be a worldling was sinful, that to be luxurious was sinful. Those who had succumbed to worldliness, their fate I recalled. I knew that it is the craving for worldly enjoyment that had lured many to death. And so the voice sounded from within,—“Beware, be not worldly-minded, nor sell thyself to the world. Do not concern yourself with such weighty problems as disgrace, sin etc. For the present, first shun all amusement, for it is by following the cue of amusements that many a man goes to hell.” Thus, there grew in me a dread of the world. Whenever the thought of the world came to my mind, I felt as if an emissary of hell had come. The visage of the world I regarded as terrifying ; and the thing called “wife” became to me an object of terror. The world seemed to me a veritable poisoned chalice ; beautiful without but deadly within. I was in constant suspense and dread. I suspected that wheresoever I set my feet I would find it full of thorns, terrorised by demons, and the breeding place of malignant fevers. My smiling countenance became melancholy. My heart said,—“If you smile, you will sin ; to smile is to sin.”

And smiles took leave of me. Some of my friends noticed it, but they could not comprehend it. I resolved not to desire anything that might tempt me to smile; to keep away from such books and friends that were likely to induce me to smile. Gradually I became taciturn, sparing of words, I never cast a glance towards wealth and happiness.

There was no forest to retire to, neither did I betake myself to any. I had no inclination to take to the mendicant's yellow-robe, and I did not put on any. I did not adopt any unnatural means to mortify the body in any way, nor did I feel any desire for it. The thought of any outward demonstration of asceticism never crossed my mind, I made the house I dwelt in, the room I occupied like unto the charnel house, like unto the wilderness. I considered the hubbub made by the inmates to be verily the howlings of tigers in the jungle. Whenever I came across bad manners and bad conduct, there I fancied Death exulting in its mad capers. True, my wilderness was not an uninhabited forest, but the world around me became such a one.

Living as I did in the midst of worldly affluence, I went about wearing plain clothes. I wept not but passed my time without a smile, on my face. In this state I got up from my bed in the morning, and in this state I went to bed at night. The sun could not make me smile, neither could the moon. Do you know who was my chief companion at that time? He among the English poets who could best portray this melancholy mood. It was his (Edward Young) "Night Thoughts" that I used to read. If I felt any pleasure at all in those days it was solely from reading that book. I would occupy myself with such things as would mortify spirit, deepen the serious mood, and keep the mind away from evil thoughts. When did all this happen? When

I was eighteen, nineteen and twenty. I was then preparing to enter the world having been just married, but I found that the spot whereon I was going to set up a house was verily a cremation ground. I had not much knowledge of the world, but I had learnt to fear it. Some one within me said,—“The wife is coming; you have to start a household of your own. Will you seek happiness in worldly enjoyment? Will you spend your time in the company of your wife and talk about worldly affairs? Will these things make you happy?” I reflected,—What a precious entity, a noble thing is the human soul? Shall I subject it to a wife, shall I subject it to the world? And I resolved never to do so. For I knew of many who perished having subjected themselves to their wives, many who were struck dead by thunderbolt of worldliness. Therefore, I fobade the world to touch me. Therefore, also, in everything concerning the world I go about in fear and trembling. For I was much afraid that I might someday be in the death-grip of worldiness, or succumb to greed of money. Just as I regarded lust and anger as deadly, so I looked upon wife, children and the world as a source of danger. Lest I loved these more than God, lest I regarded the world to be dearer,—this fear led me to regard the world as a terrible demon. Lest the lure of the full moon made me forgetful of God’s love (*bhakti*), I loved the darkness of the new moon. I felt no desire to go to pleasure gardenes for amusement, nor any exhilarating sense filled my heart. I used to sit still as a statue in a dark place, and only a word or two out of my heart, would I address to God. For, there was none else but He come to communicate with. Thus did the tree of my life take its root is asceticism. And not the root only but the form and shape of every limb and member, —all were moulded by asceticism. So there came to

pass all that should naturally develop in a life rooted in asceticism. In the fight between the powers of good (*gods*) and the powers of evil (*demons*) the good, the God-in-man won the victory. Because conscience and asceticism,—the two brothers had together set about to rule over my sinful life, I found later that never again could the world (*worldiness*) come near to tempt me.

My religious life began with the mortification of self and the mortification of wife. In the end the very people who were the objects of my terror turned out to be my friends; the cremation ground where I had begun to set up a home for myself, has transformed itself into a garden smiling with flowers and fruits; and through the middle of it there ran the pathway of the Lord. That it was ever a cremation ground once can no more be made out. The beginning was in sorrow, the ending is in happiness! I can not class myself with those who began their spiritual life the number of tribulations that passed over my head. "Not smiling and who are fortunate from the very beginning. "Not till thou hast completely destroyed thyself and made a corpse of it shalt thou attain godliness"—this was the law that the Lord applied in my case. Weeping I sowed the seed, smiling I am reaping the harvest. How bitterly I had to weep, how I rejoice now hugging the feet of the Lord! This, however, cannot be the law for all. Each man must follow the law specially ordained for him. But one lesson of this life applies to all. If a new truth has to be established, a great thing has to be achieved, a mighty movement has to be called into being, this travail of an austere life has to be gone through. If you want to leave your impress on posterity, to become a missionary, or take the vow of devoting your life to the good of the world, you will have to retire for some time to the wilderness of asceticism. If you want to become a twice-born (regenerate), then carrying the

mendicant's staff you will have to go, once at least, through the ordeal of the prescribed paces. We ought to profit by the course of discipline prescribed by the ancient Hindus on the occasion of the investiture of the sacred thread. If you aspire to be born again, if you would see yourself in the hands of God, you shall have to kill the beast within you, and cast out all the evil propensities. For some time tears of anguish will be wrung out of you, the framework of your heart will snap and crack, but a length you will be transformed and put on the body incorruptible !

If you wish to be reborn, to live the life eternal, die once, like Jesus, Budha and Chaityanya, pass through the ordeal of sorrows and suffering and come out risen anew. But if you are content to do only the ordinary things, then, like the professing Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian, practise, in keeping with your aim, just a little asceticism, for a short time. But on no account enter life without some experience of suffering, without practising asceticism. Have you already entered world ? If you have, come out of it, take to asceticism, and then re-enter the world. If you do it not in this world, you will have to do it in the next. If you have never wept, you can never have a hearty length. You will never appreciate the beauty and grandeur of the full moon, if you have not experienced the dark gloom of the new moon. Blessed be the Merciful that the flowers of joy, born of *bhakti*, loving devotion, now bloom in my life's garden.

From my experience I have learnt never to lose heart on account of sorrows or suffering. For sorrows came as the herald of the glad tidings that 'happiness is at hand.' To take to asceticism hoping that happiness would follow, is natural, but the aping of ascetic austerities for its own sake I drepudiate. I am not an aspirant of that asceticism which

requires strenuous efforts to attain. I did not practise it by smearing the body with ashes, I did what naturally suggested itself to me. Natural and spontaneous is the kind of asceticism I adopt, and from such asceticism I derive much good. When dark clouds from we know there will be a shower of rain. So whenever the cloud of asceticism appears in the firmament of life, I take it as an evidence of this scientific truth—that either there will be the advent of a new dispensation, or a new truth will be revealed, or else a new order of discipline will be discovered. Whenever such things occur, the spirit of asceticism first takes possession of the heart. The coming of this ascetic spell is, as it were, the labour pain, which betokens that a child, fair and full of promise, will surely see light.

When there is a divine command to cook your own food, to walk bare-footed, or to go and live in a particular place for a couple of days, know that these come not for tormenting the body. For no good results from mere penance and physical suffering. What after all, is the test of true asceticism? There is no cloud of true asceticism which is not followed by a shower. Forsake that asceticism which is intended for a show. Conceal the fire of asceticism within the heart outwardly keeping up your accustomed mode of living. If enlightened moderners call such conduct hypocrisy, know that born ascetics like me do countenance it. By the command of God, for the propagation of religion, I live in genteel society as a matter of social necessity, but at heart I am a lineal descendant of the family of ascetics. My father and grandfather belong to the same family.

The asceticism that obtains among our kind is not a thing of stress and strain, but a spontaneous development. What little of respectability and out-ward polish you find

in me is retained in deference to social convention, in obedience to divine injunction. By the command of the New Dispensation my spirit has clothed itself in the ascetic's tiger-skin, so there has been no need to use it outwardly ; and it is better not to do so. My brothers, see that asceticism abides in your hearts. Love it dearly as an indispensable constituent of religion. Many in the Brahmo-Samaj have been benefited by it ; as for the New Dispensation many practices of asceticism have been revealed in it, and adopted by it. Through asceticism the soul puts on the beauty of the regenerate life. If in your experience suffering has come first of all, then the happiness that will follow will endure for ever. For all the weeping today, there will be a greater measure of rejoicing on the morrow. If you look downcast in the beginning the smile of gladness shall surely light it up afterwards, vindicating and glorifying asceticism.

Thou Friend of the poor, Refuge of the needy, everyone must hold fast to that rule of life which Thou dost lay down for him. When on the eve of entering the householder's life I was initiated into the cult of asceticism, I knew that my life was not for merry-making, but that tribulations would, now and then, come upon it. But Thou, O God, didst not chastise me. Thou didst not break the bruised reed for purposes of correction, nor didst Thou crush the afflicted body and mind. Bitter drugs Thou dost make us take but only to save our life. Clouds overcast the sky, but not to keep it shrouded in perpetual darkness. Chasing away the clouds of asceticism comes the thrill of joy making the heavens and the world around dance in joy. The earth, too, filled with its crops, flowers and fruits, joins in the dance. I have found in my life, that every time the heart is heavy-laden, it brings forth good fruits. The darkness of night comes as the harbinger of the morning.

light. God of the poor, whatever Thou art pleased to ordain, is for our good. What a plethora of sorrows and sufferings I had, yet none of them has lasted. All the gloom and the sadness is gone, and day after day I have been tasting the joys of health, holiness and spirituality. I have also experienced the joys of God-vision. Grant, O Lord, that I may never shrink from shouldering the cross of asceticism. For by it the heart is purified, the senses controlled, the spirit vow-abiding, and the whole life exalted.

Come unto me, Thou helper of the helpless, the Ascetic of ascetics, Thou that hast forshaken Thy all,—I will follow Thee wheresoever Thou goest. Becoming an ascetic at heart I will walk with Him the chief among ascetics. After all this, how can I say that asceticism is a source of sorrow and suffering? As much of asceticism as Thou didst prescribe for me before, so much of dancing in joy is my lot today. As much tears as I shed before, so much do I now smile, and rejoice in the close embrace of my friends, wife and children who were a terror to me at one time, but now I sit surrounded by them, rejoicing in the joy that comes from Thee. I feel that I verily behold heaven on earth, that this world is no more the terrible thing it was imagined to be, and that having been lifted above it, I have not had to enter it at all. As formerly I used to sit forlorn, in melancholy mood, so now I find this temple of God full of friends. What a goodly number of friends devoted to Thee hast Thou given me. If dancing starts now, how enthusiastically would they dance with uplifted arms! My own joys I share with them, and the happiness of others I make mine own. That my wife and children, kinsmen and friends would all befriend me, I do not even dream of. How could I anticipate that the house I had set up on the cremation ground would be for me the place of union with

the saints and prophets of heaven ? How much happiness has already been mine, and how much more is yet in store for me ? Hail asceticism, hail Thou Inaugurator of the spiritual path of asceticism ; before Thee I prostrate myself. My prayer is—Lead us Thou along the path of true asceticism and so make us happy and blessed !

CHAPTER V

INDEPENDENCE : *THE VOICE REGNANT*

When the Holy Spirit initiated me into the mysteries of religion, the master word, "Independence," was embodied in the initiation charge. "My dear child," said He, "never be dependent on any one—this is my supreme exhortation to thee." From the beginning up to the present moment I have been following this injunction to the best of my ability in thought, word and deed. Dependence acts as a poison in this world of ours ; it is the cause of untold miseries of hell upon earth. I do not know why, from the very beginning, I had such an intense aversion for dependence. Men strive to drive away lust and anger, and to master other evil passions ; they eagerly launch out against these evils, but none goes crazy over such a declaration of Independence as—"I will never be dependent." Providence had certainly some mysterious purpose in view ; therefore, did He instil this holy passion of independence at the root of my life. What a bitter hatred of dependence did He create in me I did not speculate on the evil consequences of dependence the very idea of dependence was sin to me. I looked upon dependence as sin, as a source of evil, as enmity against God. Such was the conclusion I came to without going into the question of its after-effects, for one must implicitly believe in the efficacy of the God-given word, the moment he receives it.

Therefore, to this day I never could bend my head to any one. I had to suffer a great deal on this account, but never once have I forsaken the God-given charge entrusted to me. To this independence, immoveable as a rock, have I clung with both hands; but I must confess it is not an easy

thing to hold on to this vow of independence. There is indeed, a deep meaning hidden in this divine injunction,—“Never suffer thyself to be dependent.” Because the New Dispensation would have to come, all sorts of errors and false beliefs would have to be discarded, and the sovereignty of truth established anew in an independent spirit; therefore for all these was the spirit of independence present in me from the very beginning.

Thus, it was independence which became the fundamental principle, the first and foremost word—the word fraught with creative power. And what else can be the outcome of such a spirit than the avowal, ‘Never will I suffer myself to be dependent.’ Out of this spirit have sprung to life many momentous movements. I resolved that I would never allow my body and mind to be fettered by the chains of dependence; never enslave myself to any particular individual; never fall at the feet of any man; never sell myself to my elders or superiors, never slavishly worship any particular book; never identify myself with particular sect and continually sing its praises day and night. As on one hand I resolved not to do all this, so on the other I resolved never to be a slave to self-will and pride, never reject any vow which should be taken from the hand of God.

The more the spirit of independence grew in me, the more I perceived how idolatry, caste and other evils were running rampant in the land. And immediately, preparations were set on foot to cut asunder their oppressive shackles. Centuries in succession had suffered the country to remain a slave to these evils, and I stood up, sword in hand, to cut them down. The moment I saw errors and false beliefs keeping my fathers and kinsmen in bondage tyrannizing the neighbourhood, I unsheathed my weapon to destroy them, I never could tolerate salvery of any kind

nor can now. If found anybody enslaved by his desires and passions, I felt it to be wrong, and could never rest quiet. My weapons always flashed to cut down all kinds of slavishness, I did not realize the magnitude of the evil wrought by dependence after going through a process of reflection, neither was it after deliberation that I took up weapons against it. But long afterwards I recognised the wonderful power exercised by this mighty word this God-given master word. Many were the false notions current in the world which turned my brothers and sisters into bondsmen and bondswomen. To enable me to take up my stand against all these, the training that God gave me was such that the very sight of dependence stirred me up. When I found anyone a slave to anger, my wrath was kindled against anger itself. I could not suffer any one to become slavishly attached even to father or son. Whenever I saw any one a slave to riches or fame or to any particular sect, my blood would boil.

God endowed man with independence, but he sold his birthright in the market of the world, and being overpowered by its sins and iniquities is now wailing piteously. Men of a certain type and temperament fall at the feet of different kinds of men and become their bondslaves. Such a hankering after servitude that they continue in bondage for years and years. Servitude to certain women, in particular, is called lewdness: to men, in general, slavery and a slave to riches is called avaricious. But all these are so many kinds of sin; to be a slave is sin. When inordinate attachment to the things of the world becomes the ruling passion of life, the result is disastrous. To whatsoever home or hamlet I go I hear anger saying,—“See how many bondsmen and bondswomen I have.” I hear greed saying,—“Look, how many servants I have; even how many mighty potentates am I victimizing.” This slave mentality that

has entered into all is hellfire and has been consuming all in a living death. My God! they know not that independence is salvation, and dependence hell. We must unfurl the victoria-flag of independence and reduce to dust the strongholds of servitude. We will not succumb to any form of sectarianism. Some advise, "Obey your preceptor." My heart answers.—"I fear to do so." "Obey your father, and mother." "I fear to do so" comes the reply. "Follow the counsels of and those who are your friends, those with whom you are united in common faith." My soul answers—"I am sore afraid." "Gladly submit to those who are specially devoted to you and help you in your religious and philanthropic activities. My spirit answers—"I dread dependence." I would not be bound by an exclusive attachment to any friend. Even the best of my friends have noticed that I do, indeed, love them, but am not enslaved by my affections. So my friends say. "We cannot say this man loves us over much, for he does not do what we tell him to do, but he sets up an Inner Court of his own judgment." My friend asks me to do a certain thing, but I do it not. I would not do even a good deed on the good advice of another, but I will do it at the bidding of God. What I do not at the insistence of another. I do with alacrity when God commands. Not till I hear the voice of God will I take up any work. Such a resolution may lead others into troubles; but I have been fortunate in as much as instead of doing harm it has done me great good. As I have hurt the feeling of my friends by not being subservient to them, So I have not been subservient to my wife either, neither have I been bound by any inordinate attachment to my children, or to my country, nor shall ever be. None will be able to prove that I have ever subjected myself to any person. living or dead, nor cherish an undue attachment to any.

Independence has always been dear and precious to me.,

but I have never cared for an independence divorced from the love of God. I did not buy that brand of liberty begotten of proud self-will, that is sold in the market of the world. I did not seek independence as a means of exalting myself, or of securing a higher place of society. Such freedom is really the libertinism of hell, I do not call it independence. I have loved but have not become entangled in my affections. This is true love. I have loved you but have not subjected myself to you. If I had appealed to people in some time-serving fashion my following would have now numbered hundreds and thousands. If I had sought to tempt people by the glamour of an inordinate attachment, and enlist them in a sodality of slaves, my church would have been full to overflowing. But I made independence the captain of my band, Therefore, I call those who are with me my friends; I do not call myself their master. Independence will triumph. I say again and again, 'Truth shall triumph'. Independence will sound the rallying call; if people come in response to it, let them come, But I will never set myself up as a master nor take to the profession of a tutelary priest. Dependence I heartily adhor. Shall I not adhor in others, what I adhor in myself? I cannot bear to see even the least in my fold a dependent. I cannot suffer any person to be dependent another. That anybody should be dependent on me is equally insufferable. What answer shall I give to my father if I allow any man to subject himself to me? Shall I dump my own views on the shoulders of another? Shall I govern other according to my own sweetwill? Shall I try to bring people to my sold and keep them in subjection by the alluring phantom of false attachment? Then certainly, hell will open its jaws to devour me and heaven will kick me out. If I fail to build up a community, if not even a single soul remain with me, I will never

make another man my slave since I myself have never been one.

Do any one of you know, of my ever being enslaved by another? Why should I let you slavishly follow anybody when I myself have never done it? Who so great a sinner and hypocrite as he who not suffering himself to be a slave, seeks to enslave others, or laughs at those living in servitude. A master I am not, nor have I tried to bring others under my rule. I have always imparted to others what I have learned, that is to say, I am a learner and I am ever ready to learn. If there be fifty men in my fold, they are of fifty different types. Truth is my witness, the sun and the moon are my witnesses, there is no room for dependence in my church. If there be a hundred men present here in this congregation, each is his own master or chief,—independent of one another. Everyone will have to admit it here and now; everyone will have to acknowledge it when I am gone. No one in this community breathes the air of dependence; every one lives and moves in independence, I never wish to grind any one as in a mill; I wish to see everyone independent. I do not want you to call any one your master or ruler. God alone do I know to be our Teacher and Ruler. If any one with slave-mentality has sneaked in here, like a fraud, I will have that hypocrite turned out without fail. None of your slavish lot here. When he who has the charge of this community is not himself dependent on anyone, who has always hated dependence, no member of it will ever be a dependent. Every member of it has a responsible task which he has to perform, a solemn mission which he alone can fulfil.

I do not want to follow a principle blindly though it may be good. Blindly I will not lead the blind. You ask,—independence is a great principle, but if it is carried to such extremes, will it not border on self-will, or license? No,

it will not be license, rather will it be independence fulfilling itself, independence made perfect. For instance, if I do not subject myself to my earthly parents, it is because I have already pledged myself to obey God as the parent of all. In the same spirit I have carried the principle of independence right into the sphere of religious life. For there are many who have broken loose from all family ties only to become slaves to newly-formed ties in the religious community which they have joined. Again, there are others who refuse to become servile worldlings, but who on entering a religious order would, probably take a particular book as infallible and become its bonds slave. I have always kept myself aloof from all such kinds of slavery. Why should I regard a particular book as infallible? Why should I take one man to be my ideal? I have given glory to the most revered Jesus; I highly revere Sri Chaitanya, but I do not set them up as ideals of my life. Call me conceited if you like, call me even wicked if you like; but I have never regarded nor ever will regard my man as the ideal of my life. No man can ever be the perfect ideal. Where the light of Jesus reaches not, God appears there as the ideal, which becomes illuminated thereby. There is no book wherein wisdom can be got in perfection, and, therefore, I have not made any book my ideal. Who loves all the sons of God as I do? And yet in the same breath I must say,—I will not dishonour the Divine Father by making His sons the ideals of my life. I will not dishonour God by giving that regard to the Bible or the *Purana* which is due only to Him. In God alone will I abide. I will not be a slave to any one either in heaven or on earth. The tigerskin carpet, as well as the one stringed musical instrument (*the ektara*) are dear to me. But if I become inordinately attached to them, these very things will usurp the place of God in my

life. Therefore, lest I become their slaves I use them during the hours of worship, and afterwards think no more of them. I take them up for temporary use. I shall not be a slave either to any external observance of vows and penances. Who is not aware of instances when man have overcome their greed of gold only to succumb to the spell of the tiger-skin? Hence, my soul has always been on its guard lest it become inordinately attached to flowers, to the yellow robe or the tiger-skin. Having made them serve my spiritual need I will say to them, "Farewel *mridanga* (a musical instrument), farewell yellow robe, farewell tigerskin." Why should I be attached to them, when my object is accomplished? They did not come to enslave me; they are for me, not I for them. If there be the least attachment to anything whatsoever, even it be a religious vow or the like, then the penalty of hellfire raging within will be in proportion to the enslavement indulged in.

In the New Dispensation there is perfect liberty for every individual. What have to do with the meditating priest (*Guru*), the Brahmo Samaj, or my fellow believers? To none of these have I any slavish attachment. I will hold on to that which is the reality,—the substance. If need be, I can renounce the name or label of the Brahmo-Samaj, renounce everything else, but never the reality. Therefore, I find there is no agreement between others and myself. Sufferings have come in my way, but I have had much happiness also. If I take to the profession of a disciple recruiting priest, I can increase the number of men in my community. But that I cannot do. May God bless me that I may maintain, in all its fulness, the spirit of independence in myself and in my friends. Will our numbers increase in this way? Well, whatever comes by this way of independence, let it come. Flowers of Divine benediction will be showered over them that are

independent, and they will abide with the Father, and will no more be led astray by self-will. Sins, errors and superstitions,—let all these be arrayed on one side, and on the other, tyrannous self-will, arrogance and pride,—then against them both hurl the deadly weapon of independence. We are dependent on God, therefore are we wholly independent.

O Gracious God, O Lord of Independence, Thou Free Spirit, what a powerful. what a wonderful watchword is independence ! Since Thou hast in Thy Mercy initiated in this cult of independence, do Thou for our good increase the spirit of independence in me and my brothers and sisters. Look at our state, Lord. Sin with its accompanying torments is well-nigh killing ; over and above it the evil customs, vices and errors of the land have flung their tentacles round me, Thy child ; and on top of all, various sorts of entangling attachment press heavily on my shoulders. O God, the very thought, that these forces of evil may win me over and make me their bonds slave, makes me cry out to Thee. O Divine Mother, I who should be serving Thee, whom am I serving instead ? In the accursed service of the god of wordliness, I am dying a spiritual death. An overwhelming load of servitude weighs heavily upon my mind and shoulders. Ah, dependence, is putting men to death. O, Dispenser of Independence, where art Thou at this crisis ? Why should men undergo so much suffering ? Let a war be waged against curse of dependence, this slave-mentality. Come, O Thou Almighty Mother ; come with Thy thundering war cry and scatter the hostile host. No more will I serve anyone else save Thee. Thou Mother Blissful, no more will I go over to the side of sin, nor be enslaved by my passions. I will do what Thou dost bid me do, go where Thou dost bid me go, eat what Thou dost bid me eat, and never do what

Thou dost forbid. I will not be a slave to any evil habit. How it pains me in that dark hour when conscience upbraids me saying,—“How could'st Thou fail to obey that Mother who loves you so much? How couldst Thou reject Her counsels? How darest Thou insult Her?” I understand now what a terrible hell servitude is. Save Thou Thy sinful child. Break the iron chains of subjection, that I may soar at will with my brothers and friends, like uncaged birds, and roam about freely in the garden of paradise enjoying the fruits of heaven. May we no more live confined in the cage of dependence. Let the freed soul, the creatures of empyrean, soar at will in the heaven. Merciful God, bless us that we may attain happiness by making the right use of Thy gift of Independence. Father, this is my humble prayer to Thee !

CHAPTER VI

THE INNER VOICE : *IS THE DIVINE WILL VOICED*

If there be a voice speaking within one's self men usually take it to be that of a disembodied spirit. It is generally believed that only he who is possessed of spirits hears voice within and without. From the dawn of my religious life I have many a time heard such voices and words spoken within and outside myself ; but I have never taken them to be utterances of spirits, nor ever shall. This is another peculiar feature of my life. That within every individual, there lives and moves another being, that there are two tongues in what appears to be one, and that by close listening two voices, distinct and unmistakably clear, can be ascertained,—this has been found to be true many times and on many occasions. Men discuss, reflect, and by reasoning derive their religious knowledge. But in my case it was not by the process of reasoning and deliberation that I took to the path of religion ; this I have admitted again and again. I do distinctly feel the presence in me of another person who is not myself and who addresses me as "thou," and it is by listening to His words that I take to the practice of religion.

That there is some one who speaks within the heart,—is a well-attested truth which I have repeatedly experienced. I know there are many who do not hear this inner voice speaking. There are others who think that this voice comes from disembodied spirits and that the continued hearing of it begets superstition and causes harm. Some even go so far as to think that persons who hear such voices should be

classed with mad men. Such beliefs are current not only in this country but in all countries. If any man says there is in me Another One besides myself, then his fellow creatures in meeting assemb'ed vote him mad. If this be, indeed, a case of madness, I would like to be possessed by such madness. It is verily spiritual madness of faith, and salvation is its fruit. For I do not call it the voice of spirits. I call it the voice of the living God. I can not harbour the slightest unbelief towards this voice. Whenever I heard this voice, whenever the words, the clear accents of the Invisible Living Being reached my ears, I was quite sure it was not the voice of my friends, parents, wife or children, nor my own ; it was not truths learnt from books, not a recollection of the past reappearing in memory, not a picture painted in bright colours on the canvass of my mind by the goddess of fancy. It is God's voice, it is He Himself who is calling me to desist from some sin, to perform an act of piety, to start a new enterprise, to travel to a new place. or commanding me to root out some iniquity or take up arms against some evil custom. It never occurs to me to think that it is I myself who takes these decisive steps after much thought, or set about to carry out these tasks on my own initiative.

He who has dowered human nature with this faculty, he who has made human nature what it is, can alone say what feelings arise in the minds of men when they hear such voice within themselves. I could not banish this voice from my heart by any ingenuity or effort of mine, nor by adopting any means whatsoever. Many are apt to think themselves to be great men, to have acquired knowledge and possess the power of doing things : or to have by their own exertions removed many difficulties from their way, and to be destined to leave a name behind.

them in the world. But there are others who admit that though they have, indeed, done a good many things in the light of their own knowledge and wisdom, there are certain other thoughts and deeds which they felt were assuredly not their own but as coming from Another Person speaking through them. This Person has a nature and a will of His own even as I have mine. As I have my decisions, so He has His rulings. One is the human soul, the other the supreme soul. The two are distinct, separate. The substantive is one, the attributives, are two. In the one soul-substance inhere two attributes, human and Divine. The human speaks within the soul. One common organ of speech lends itself to being used by both teach experiencing its own specific quality or flavour. For most men the realization of two persons in one and the same individual requires a good deal of practice, of culture. If we constantly reflect, that all inspired utterances come from God, all bad words, motives, counsels and all self-delusion proceed from me ; that all good is from God, all evil from myself; that health and happiness are His gifts, and disease and weakness spring from me,—if we think and practise in this manner. then, by the operation of psychological laws, we shall take upon ourselves the blame for all misdeeds, and for all good deeds give glory and praise unto God. While to some, this perception of two persons is an acquired feeling and an acquired knowledge, to others it is natural and spontaneous.

Two birds (symbolical of the two souls) everlastingly dwell on the self-same tree of life ; their colours are to some extent alike, and their voices greatly resemble each other. There is similarity as well as dissimilarity. Those who are naturally led to hold this view, those in whom this consciousness is intuitive, in them the Divine Voice

is heard at all times. As you now hear the thunder-clap reverberating in the heavens, exactly in the same manner reverberates the voice of God throwing the inner world in commotion. In many cases the fallible mind is apt to arrive at wrong conclusions. At one time they believe that a particular truth has come as a result of praying ; and, again, they conclude it has been acquired by study and reflection. At one time they think that God has enlightened them as a reward of their supplication ; at other times they think that they are in no way indebted to God for anything. It is only when, through self-discipline, a man is established in humility that he is able to perceive that the higher truths are not the acquisition of his understanding, that the sublime emotions are not the product of his imagination. Where faith burns bright, where the voices of two persons are distinctly perceived, there good results invariably follow. I know for certain that these words are His and those other words mine. My appetites prompt, "Drink, go on enjoying the pleasures of the flesh." Another voice commands,—“Follow thou my appointed path ; thou mayest thereby have to wear rags, and even forsake all thou hast, yet I say therein lies thy good.” My reason tells me that asceticism involves painful restrictions on food ; the other Reason declares, “It will not do to follow thy own counsel ; when I so ordain, the path of darkness is the best for thee. Thou shalt have to follow it even if a thousand demons of death confront thee.”

In my humble life I have had very often to undergo such trials. Where my own understanding apprehended poverty, ill-health, reproach and humiliation, there, over against all, only One Person said within me—“Cast out all fear ;” and my heart heeded no other voice. How can

the human understanding penetrate into the dark future and decide that a particular course is the best? The journey has but just begun and yet I am in torments. I may have to live for another forty years. How, then, shall I, with eyes and ears open, allow myself to be led by a phantom voice into the path of darkness"? Doubts such as these never crossed my mind. The voice of the One from within seemed so sweet and trustworthy that I followed it alone. The counsel of my own heart I considered as evil, and the counsels even of many good friends I considered as unreasonable. Trusting unreservedly in the still small voice within I said, "Whether I live or die. I take I refuge at Thy feet, O Lord." For its sake alone I have had to forsake my brethren and kinsmen again and again, encounter various hardships, nay, part with many dear and near ones. The voice, one moment it would bring me into the light, the next it would bid me go into the darkness. God has warned me saying,— "If ever you mistake My voice to be that of some evil spirit, it will mean instant death to you." Keeping this admonition in mind, I have always believed the voice to be that of the Invisible Spirit-God, and not of any evil spirit. Verily, the voice is His, Who dwells commingled with the soul of man.

The more I practised communion with God, and studied the science of the mind, the more I inwardly realise that the tenement called "man" is two storied, man occupying the lower, God the upper. Two birds inhabit the one tree of life, one the little bird, the human soul, and the other the larger bird, the Divine Soul. And I realised that what I had believed in from my boyhood was not unreasonable, namely, that what is called the tongue of man, when dissected, is found to consist

of two sections, one of which utters divine truths (*Vedas and Vedantas*), the other utters words of death. The one, the gross carnal tongue, speaks of things worthless and unprofitable; the other, the subtle (*spiritual*) tongue speaks on the glories of God. If the ear is deaf, one cannot hear God, but in its stead hears "money," "money." But if you cultivate your power of hearing, you will hear the sweet accents of the spiritual tongue. I cannot say how strong can be his faith who has not heard the voice of God; but those who are still struggling to follow the inner voice, I promise them an end of their struggles. As for me, no one dare laugh away this faith of mine. I do not believe that any one has the power to shake a faith which has stood the test of twenty years!

The belief that there are two voices, two persons cannot be banished from the mind. Who does not wish to take precedence in his own estimation by claiming that it is he himself who acquires learning and wealth, and decides religious questions? But there is the Other One who dwells within, before whose august presence I become as a servant, a slave before his leige-Lord, a pool or a mud-hole beside the vast ocean, a tiny lamp before the colossal sun, a small but before a palatial mansion. In the face of it all, how can I pose as the Chief, the Master? The instant I say, "Let me go and work for money," the Other peremptorily orders, "No; thou shalt not." When thousands warned me saying, "Don't do this thing, if you do even good men will desert you, and there will be no end to your humiliation;" the still small voice within, like muffled rumblings persisted in its protestations. When people spread the snare of delusion around me, hanging the millstone of evil counsel

round my neck, even then the rumblings could not be stopped. The voice would be heard throughout the day ; at night, too, it would keep me in a state of excitement, till my heart became heavy and my distress acute. When I asked, "Let me go to the left," the voice said, "No turn to the right." When I said, "Happiness and prosperity," the voice said, "No." When I cried, "It is light," the Voice said, "It is dark." Thus would the Divine Indweller answer me back every time. The Court of Appeal is always open, it knows no holiday. I have either to recognize that God speaks within ; or I have to suffer myself to be haunted and harassed by legions of evil spirits tearing at me from all sides till all peace and happiness are at an end. Shall I, a man of much learning, submit to this One-man rule ? Shall I disregard the wisdom of scripture authorities and follow the dictates of this Person ? Even that profound scholar, Socrates listened to the words of his "daemon." Wise as he was, he used to follow its counsel instead of his own.

The voice of God should never be mistaken as the judgment of human understanding. If you do so, you will deceive yourself. My solution of this problem differs from the decision of others. If whole universe go to rack and ruin, I shall never renounce this faith in the inner person. I did not come to it by any weighing of consequences ; faith can never rest on such utilitarian basis. Because some men have gone astray by adopting this course, that is no reason why I should give it up. Because some men have committed forgery that is no reason why I should give up handling or using money ; that can never be. As for those who are after money-making, they will pursue it at all costs. Because some have died, should

those who are alive also die? When, therefore, I see two persons, my own self and God, and when I find in the words of one only ignorance and immorality, and in those of the other the quintessence of all scriptures, how can I regard the two persons to be one and the same? Why should I appropriate to myself the glory which is due to God? Why should I foist on His shoulders my own faults and shortcomings? You may argue that a man may take advantage of this doctrine and proclaim his own words to be those of God. You may say, "O man, when you feel the desire for appetizing food, you will give out that words to that effect have come from the mouth of God. You will make God speak words which will justify all your evil desires and misdeeds." But I cannot abandon my faith because some may turn out to be imposters. During these twenty years how many times have I not heard His voice, and how many things have I not heard and yet never once have I been deceived? Never once during these twenty years have I had to repent on this score. Verily, I see the two souls, the human and the divine, dissolved, as it were, in one receptacle. I do not hold the view that the creator dwelleth in some remote heaven and I am left alone on this earth. No, I see His hand within my hand; His tongue within my tongue, and the Eternal's life-breath animating my life. When I listen in faith and feel the tongue moving, I watch whether the two tongues are moving in unison. If it is my sinful tongue alone that moves, I wish I could cut it off; and I beseech the Divine tongue to have its sap,

I give no heed to the words of those who call this a figment of fancy. I have only the least doubt on this point; had I any I would not have spoken from this pulpit. What would you say when two tongues are

clearly distinguishable? Would you say that man is God, that the human soul and the divine soul are one and the same? Verily, two tribunals stand out in clear contrast, the higher tribunal always quashing the decisions and verdicts of the lower. Even while you refer to the decision of the lower Court, the higher Court has already reversed it. Therefore I am a dualist. I see two Judges; one my own soul and the other ruling over and guiding it. As when I speak, my words are uttered in spirit, for the tongue of flesh cannot speak by itself, so, too, when God speaks the words are spiritually uttered, spirit speaking to spirit. The soul's utterances are like earthly sounds; the sound of iron or brass wires, the murmur of brooks or the warble of birds. Yet they are passing strange and exceeding sweet. That ear alone can discern the voice to which God gives the power. May I have increasing faith in the voice of God. May you also following the leading of faith, work out your salvation.

Thou Friend of the poor, the Indwelling Spirit, I know not in what region of being art Thou hidden. Within my heart a new *Veda* is being chanted, a new scripture is being recited, my ears drink in the words thereof, but I see not Him who doeth all these. There is one who as Chief Justice passeth judgments but I know not where His Court is. From within the very marrow of my bones Thou makest Thyself known only by The voice. Secreted within the dark recesses of my soul, Thou art voicing Thyself. As noises heard in a deserted house frighten people, so I am often startled at the sound of Thy voice within the heart. In a dark corridor of my heart I hear a voice. Instantly I ask myself, who could it be? Who is it that bids me turn away from the path of pleasure? And I said

to myself, "It is none but my God. Thou, Lord, Thou revealest Thyself in the trees ; in the sun and the moon ; as well as in the laws of morality. I believe in that mental science which says Thou art present as a person in the economy of nature ; that Thou dost preside in person in the moral laws, keeping alive the moral sense of mankind. If failing to find Thee in the world outside I ever become indifferent, the inner voice never suffers me to go to sleep. Whenever I am on the point of doing any wrong, I receive a shock. Whether I stay indoors or go into the gardens, or move out of the house, the voice divine keeps ringing in my ears ; even if the ears were plucked out, the voice would still be heard. If the body were burnt to ashes, the inner fire would go on burning. Such is Thy voice that it sounds like the mingled roar of a thousand mighty streams, hurtling down on the rocks in one tumultuous mass. However, much I try, I cannot turn a deaf ear to Thy voice. Thy voice and mine ; I cannot regard the two as one and the same by any means whatever. So sweet are Thy words that I have never come to grief by listening to them. On no account can I say that Thou hast ever led Thy servant into wrongdoing by evil counsel. Every word of Thine that I have been able to catch has been an infallible truth. Never has it so happened that I mistook the voice divine as mere fancy ; nor have I had any cause to repent. Whenever I have caught Thy words, I have caught them correctly. Having realized Thee by believing in Thy oneness, I will hold on to this vision of Thee and laugh at imaginary fears and the opinions of the world. For twenty years has Thy servant carried on this business and never has he incurred any loss but has been a gainer every time. Verily, it was an auspicious moment when I took to believing in the voice of the Living

God ; for thereby I have come to such an acquisition in this space of time. O Divine Mother, may all who have sought Thy protection seek also the shelter of the Divine Word. Grant us this blessing. I have known, O God, what an abundance of peace and happiness fill the breast when forsaken by everybody, I have remained loyal to Thy words. Therefore, I beseech Thee with folded hands that turning away from my own perverse inclinations and the evil counsels of other men I may pay heed only to Thy words. What Thou sayest, this alone may all of us seek to know. Let earthly pulpits be silent. Do Thou alone speak to me in gentle whisper filling the world within and without. Thy words are as sweet to me as nectar, the words of others are as poison. Speak to me over and over again. May we, through the power of Thy spoken word, kill the demon of sin and attain holiness and peace !

PART TWO

CHAPTER VII

INFLUX OF BHAKTI : *THE VOICE AS LOVE CALLING*

You who are here to study life, listen ; the gospel of this life is a gospel of hope. There are many things in it to kindle hope and inspire enthusiasm and energy, because, after all, I did not come into the world endowed with all the qualities I now possess. Who is there whose heart would not be enkindled with hope on hearing of truths acquired by spiritual culture, or of truths received by the grace of God and attested by personal experience ? This life has also its side of weakness, of shortcomings and darkness which, when known, will infuse hope in the hearts of even the most despairing. Therefore, give your whole-hearted attention to it.

There was no passionate attachment to God (*bhakti*) in my life at first ; neither was there much of the sentiment of love ; there was just a little of tender feeling. There was faith ; there was conscience, there was asceticism. All the three words (in Bengali *viswas*, *viveka*, *vairagya*) begin with V, and is, therefore, easy to remember. Equipped with these three I set to work in the field of religion. Gradually whatever else was needed was given to me. In the fulness of time I gathered the harvest with joy. Faith, conscience, asceticism,—all the three are dry and austere. They are all very good in themselves ; as religious commodities their value is not inconsiderable, and are even rare in certain conditions of life. Fortunately, I had these three from the very first. "I shall be good,

have a firm faith, control my senses with an iron will and sacrifice all for the sake of God,"—these were the thoughts and aspirations uppermost in my mind then. Both conscience and asceticism were, at this stage, of ever great help. From the very beginning I came to perceive that conscience and asceticism were the two fundamentals, the two chief helpers in spiritual culture.

How could the tender feeling, the solvent of *bhakti*, find its way into a life the beginnings of which were so austere? I did not even dream of such a thing then; it did not even occur to me that *bhakti*, was indispensable. I did not understand the meaning of such expressions as the 'lotus-like feet of the Mother,' so common in *bhakti*-literature. My prayers I used to offer to the august Lord of conscience. My one desire was to draw near to Him who is the God of sinner and the captive of the ascetic and the hermit. A man of faith putting his trust in the supreme Spirit,—this phenomenon alone I experienced but I had no experience of the devotee's feet for his loving God. It was the time when the sun's burning rays filled my life's sky, the soft light of the moon was denied me. I was conscious only of a conscience which consumed as well as illumined my heart. I used to challenge sin to confront me if it dared. An ever-blazing fire filled my heart so that I could defy even the lure of temptations. But the joy that is born of *bhakti* (passionate love of God) was not in my heart. That which one has when one is pure and has mastered his senses, I had. But that was just satisfaction and contentment, not joy. But real joy cannot be found except in the worship of the Divine Mother as the Fulness of joy. There is a sense of satisfaction when you have made obeisance to the Lord of conscience in fear and trembling; but joy comes when we worship the Divine Mother in loving devotion. If any of you be still in this state, I hold out the message

of hope and say, "Despair not, brother, despair not." If you have begun your religious life in fear, I assure you it will find its consummation in rapturous devotion and joy. If you take great pains today to build up a noble life, you will rejoice to find the flowers of *bhakti* blossoming in you tomorrow.

I had never hoped to be classed with those who are devotees of divine joy. Although in some quarters, among some of my honoured friends, I went by the name of *Brahmananda* (Rejoicer in God), my heart was far from acquiescing in it; said, "You do not deserve it". Caught in the grip of austere ideas, I continually told myself—"Renounce this, renounce that, renounce, renounce; mortify the flesh, exert yourself to the utmost, and preach the religion free from idolatry". I did not hope for the nectar of peace, the nectar of loving devotion. I knew not how to look up to the Supreme Mother. I looked up to the Father and called on Him only, the door of the Mother's inner apartment was not yet opened for me. Nor did any one show me the way that led to it. "God takes care of us all like a Mother".—I listened to these words but took it as figure of speech. There was as yet no exuberance of *bhakti* in me. The very utterance of the name 'Mother' did not throw me into raptures; tears of love I scarcely shed. The poetic impulse was wanting in me. It is all so strange how, eventually, the temple of the Mother came to be built by me. In those days I was an uncompromising follower of conscience; so were almost all the Brahmos of the time. How one type of character, reproduced, was made manifest in many, spreading to five, ten and even a hundred young people. The name of the *bhakti* musical instrument (*mridanga*) was not heard among us; we had not yet learnt to call God by the sweet name of *Hari* (God of *bhakti*), the face of the Divine Mother beaming with joy was seen.

completely hidden from sight. The Brahmo worshippers did not yet address God as the Lord of Beauty (*Srinath*), the Divine Spouse (*Sripati*). With us then God was the Father, the temple of the Divine Mother as the spirit of joy was yet to be raised. Not a single choral hymn was composed and sung to the accompaniment of *khole* or *mridanga*.

As, inwardly, I lacked this sentiment of *bhakti*, so it was not suggested to me from without. Within and without there reigned supreme the austere culture of faith, conscience and asceticism; love existed only in a small measure. In this state of spiritual drought, sand-storms began to blow in the desert of my life. How long could such a state of things continue? I felt that things were not exactly right. Quite a long time passed in this way till I felt here should be a change. It occurred to me one day that a *khole* should be bought. So long as the spirit of Vaishnavism was not very pronounced in me, God manifested Himself solely through conscience. But as soon as the spirit of *bhakti* appeared in me, then, in some subtle and inscrutable fashion, some One from within drew my heart's desire towards the loving God of devotees. I passed through a spiritual conversion; I discovered that a man might come to possess that which was not in him before. Now there has been such an influx of *bhakti* in me that I can no longer tell which is predominant,—conscience or *bhakti*, joyousness or asceticism, happiness or stern religious culture. I did not remain a dry, austere theist in the Brahmo Samaj; but I placed peace and joy side by side with conscience. It is now impossible for me to find out which is more abundant. From the abundance of *bhakti* which I have now acquired, it may appear to others that it is also one of my natural endowments.

I began my religious life in an austere spirit, intent on

the cultivation of purity alone. For a time I had even to take the vow of absolute silence. My one thought was how to attain a good character, walk righteously, renounce all, and live like a mendicant. I felt no desire to abandon myself to the enjoyment of God's company. Many learned men are of opinion that inborn qualities alone unfold themselves, that man cannot acquire anything that is not implanted in his very nature, and that acquired piety or virtue is a fiction, a verbal quibble. That he who had no *bhakti*, no faith in his spiritual constitution can never acquire them ; that he who is born endowed with *bhakti* can alone develop it by culture, and that he who began his religious life in fear must also end it in fear ;—many hold this view. But the case was otherwise with me. I must say I began my religious life with fear and trembling, but now I find myself immersed in joy. And what has happened in my case, exactly the same happens to all. In early life I acquired the title *Brahma Jnani* (a knower of God) for having found God through faith, but now to faith has been added joy and happiness through *bhakti*. The beginnings stern and austere, the end soft and tender ; God first as Father, then as Mother also. This fuller revelation of God I beheld in my life. I watched God disporting Himself in me ; making my life the theatre of His activities. Originally God was identified with the one name Brahma, but in course of time the One Person became transformed into many and assumed none can tell how many names. O, how I wish every one may see God even as I have seen Him in all His beauty and manifold diversity ! For, if the unattainable has been attained in the life of one man, it can surely be attained by all. He who, caught in the grip of stern and austere ideals, who was weeping is now smiling with joy,—these tidings should be communicated to all. What little knowledge of God I had increased. With

folded hands I had been calling upon God till I felt that it was He Who was drawing me unto Him. Thenceforth I learnt to call God my Mother. And even in the name "Mother" how many aspects of the Godhead did I see and with what varying emotions did I address Her! At one time I beheld the Mother as Power coupled with Joy, another time as Wisdom united with Love. The Mother has revealed Herself to me in many ways and forms; and how many more manifestations still keep on coming before me! Let no one ever say that he has exhausted seeing all the manifestations of the Mother. For we have only recently begun to study the gospel of *bhakti*. The more we become loving devotees of the Lord, the more we shall see the beauty of the Mother in the fulness of Her joy. And we shall be able to see Her manifold charms inspite of our human infirmities.

Now is the time for such acquisitions. That which we had we have cultivated and developed. This is the time to acquire what we have not got in us. May to-day's discourse be fruitful towards this end in particular. As for me what I had not before I have in me now. Once I had no *bhakti* in me; and it was utterly impossible for me to sing hymns; in fact, I never thought that I would ever venture to sing in the presence of other people. I never knew that I would ever call God by the name of Mother. But now I feel as if the very sight of the Mother would make me go wholly mad. I am sure he who has not been able to call my Mother his Mother, he has not seen God in His fulness. He who has not seen my Mother he has achieved nothing whatsoever. For this mother will surely make her way into every home. I can now say with all the force at my command that the Mother will certainly visit the house of every one of the millions who inhabit India. What has taken place in my life will also happen

in the lives of others. Is it said that there is no love of God in the heart of educated India, that English education has so withered up our hearts that no love can grow therein? Ah, not so. Since my dark days are over, yours also will. God's day is sure to come. There is hope even for the undevout. May my hope and *bhakti* grow from more to more. Her love has made me slightly mad, may it madden me more. May such a frenzy of madness, such a passion of *bhakti* possess me as will provoke the world's utmost antagonism, such amazing developments come in quick succession as will make men abuse me all the more. I would consider myself blessed if I can pass the rest of my days in the enjoyment of such beatific experiences.

How could such a flood of *bhakti* come after such a prolonged drought of the spirit! How could I be given to see such a beatific vision of the Mother-heart of God! There were among us some devotees in whom *bhakti* made its appearance before it did in me. Why did they not introduce the *mridanga*? Why did they not take the lead in organising community and choral singing *Sankirtan*? Why did they not reveal the inner sanctum wherein is found God the Mother? Why? Because if one, who is not a devotee in any sense, were to take to dancing and singing on seeing the Mother, the scene would, as in a flash, quicken the right spirit and the intuitive vision of those who behold it. They would exclaim, —“Look, is it not strange that this man should speak of *bhakti*? Is not he the same as travelled from place to place preaching of nothing but conscience? He never took to the path of *bhakti*. How is it that he plays on the *mridanga*? Does it signalise the advent of the living God? Perhaps the saying that “God's grace alone availeth” is going to be fulfilled? That, with such words as these, all would take to the path of *bhakti*, therefore is it that I was made to serve His purpose in this strange fashion.

That all that happened to me were the doings of God Himself I alone understood when I was taken to the depths of *bhakti*. That it was none else but God was amply proved by the fact that the venerable old devotees of the Brahmo Samaj who could have given a hint about *bhakti* never said a single word to me about it. At that spiritual crisis when I spent my days praying, "O God, save me, help me, deliver me," none came forward saying, "Quick, throw open the gates of *bhakti*." Only One Person spoke ; He spoke Who alone can. And, behold, the lotus flower of *bhakti* blossomed in the sahara of my soul ; the flower of love blossomed from out of my heart of stone. Verily, all things are wrought by the power of prayer ; all that is needful is supplied by it. Now I have both the solid earth of faith and the life-giving waters of *bhakti*. I have now the solid mount (Himalaya) of faith and the lake of *bhakti*. I have now as much of stern asceticism as of tender love. My Mother feeds me with asceticism with one hand with love with the other at one and the same time. She is constantly feeding me with both hands. God had been glorified in this. She has made my joy and happiness overflow by pouring *bhakti* in measures overflowing.

Thou Refuge to the lowly, Infinite Mercy, boundless is Thy love ; and marvellous are the dispensations of Thy mercy. In what awful light did I see Thee at first. How dreadful wert Thou to me then, and how beatific is the vision of Thee which now floods my heart ! What made Thee reveal such a beautiful form to me ? Where did it lie hidden all this time ? Through what pathway hast Thou entered my heart ? I pass on the glad tidings of hope to my brethren ; grant that they also may be partakers of this bliss. I did not keep track of the path I followed across the arid, sandy wastes, the mountain valleys I traversed, the hamlets I went past on my way to the shores of *bhakti*.

Therefore, I am unable to direct anyone, saying "Follow this path and you will have *bhakti* : play on the *mridanga* or pursue this course and you will be able to dance." I have no recollection, no idea, no certain knowledge or information of the way to *bhakti*. The only thing I remember is that once I had no *bhakti*, and that I have it now. There was a time when I could not call Thee Mother, now I ask thee, O Loving Mother, where wert Thou hidden so long ? If there be any one among the Brahmos who is still unhappy, it is because he has not seen Thee Whom I call my Mother. If he but sees Thee, the dark night of his sorrow will come to an end. Who amongst you has seen my Mother,—the Fulness of Joy ? Whoever has seen Her I call him comrade, him I embrace, he is my friend, he is the best of men, superior to every one. O Mother, bring me more such friends. What will it avail to make a pretence of calling "Lord," "Lord," when now, even three of you cannot unite, when even five men cannot agree ? But if they will accept my Mother, deep and loving unity will spring up, and there will no more be divisions into sects and castes. No discord, no estrangement can come if all see the same Mother. But the Being whom I call Mother is not called so by others ; they do not seek salvation of Him whom I call my Saviour. Hence so much dissension, so much suffering and so much pain. Lord, Thou dost never stir up strife. When the Mother is with us, we cannot quarrel. Partners-in-dance can never fall foul of one another. Can there be any discord where dancing reigos supreme ? When will that day of dancing come ! I hold out this message of hope ; I know not if my friends who hear it will strive to realise it. So long as Thou art not seen as the Mother of all, there will be four, five, ten,—any number of sects. But I know a day will come, may be millions of years hence, when sectarianism will no longer dare raise its head. What a harrowing

thought,—to have to wait for such a length of time. Wilt Thou not, O Blissful Mother, vouchsafe this boon to Thy child who has no other refuge, that these few brothers and sisters of the New Dispensation who have begun to worship Thee may continue to worship Thee alone and none else. What a change has come over me ! I who worked myself to death picking the dry leaves of an unfeeling faith, am now inebriated with *bhakti* ! Make me more inebriated ; and India, nay the whole world, will be inebriated with the wine of *bhakti*. I would like to see before I die the whole land revelling in *bhakti*. I did not rejoice so much now to hear that idolatry is disappearing or the number of monotheists increasing ; but I do rejoice much when I hear people calling Thee their Mother. I hope all will call Thee Mother, and join in the New Dance around Thee. What were we once, these few brothers ; and what have we now become ! We have shaken off all shyness ; and, to-day, ours is a *bhakti* which knows no rest, which is reckless, wild and inebriating. I know not what developments will come about tomorrow. And as is our dance, so are our dramatic performances. No one can foretell what will follow. Mother, may all our eyes turn towards Thee,—the only One. I do not want a multiplicity of gods. The worship of a thousand gods of doctrine, or the many thousand abstractions of Absolute will not promote the happiness of mankind. Stand Thou, our One Mother, in our midst, and let all India dance round Thee. Infinite Mercy, as we dance round and round in exuberant *bhakti*, may we become inebriated. Do Thou, O Lord of the helpless, grant us this blessing in Thy Mercy !

CHAPTER VIII

SHYNESS AND TIMIDITY : *THEIR SPHERES AND COUNTERPARTS*

I have told you of the shortcoming (want of *bhakti*) that was in me : you have also heard how by the grace of God the want was removed. Now I should also tell you of certain mutually contradictory elements in my nature. Listen to my experience of the clash of two sets of conflicting emotions, of shyness and fear over against shamelessness and fearlessness. You should, however, understand that in due time, I enjoy the peace that results from the harmony of these opposites. For quite a long time I have lived as a slave to shyness and fear. Like other evil passions they have tyrannized over me, and even now their assaults have not ceased ; I did not voluntarily or with pleasure accept them as masters. Shyness and fear are the sworn enemies of good and true men. But their hold is broken in the same way as that of other enemies. Whether it be from lack of discipline or from natural weakness, I still suffer from shyness and the fear of the world of men. Try as I may, I cannot get rid of them. I meet them at every turn and feel myself imprisoned in their tyrannous hold. Shyness and fear—each has its legitimate sphere of influence. The Lord has been pleased, in my case, to withdraw them from the sphere of religion and confine them to worldly matters. But as He extended my spiritual powers, as my conscience grew in majesty and authority, as my love of God increased through prayer and devotions, and my faith and courage waxed strong, I felt that in the religious world I have none to fear. At the very dawn of my

religious life I learnt, by the grace of God, the lesson that man as mere man is of no real worth.

In proportion as my faith increased, shyness and fear in matters pertaining to religion decreased. Shyness and fear are still in me, but they are confined to worldly matters. Where I do not hear the voice of God, where I do not feel the call of duty, there these two old tyrants inveigle me into their toils. Under such circumstances, my countenance undergoes a complete change ; I feel shy and am afraid to appear in public or to talk to people. This head often lifts itself up bravely to magnify the name of the Lord ; but this same head hangs helplessly down before very ordinary people in regard to worldly things. It seems I came into the world with a natural infirmity, a shy disposition. Every time shyness and fear possess me, I feel miserable. And who do you think are the people I fear ? I fear even the common porters in the street, men whom people call 'depressed' and illiterate. When I see great scholars I fear to enter their company. My heart tells me, "In such a big assembly where only men of learning are being honoured, you can not come in." I do not, indeed, hear any such command within me as, "Here knowledge alone shines in power ; the darkness of ignorance must not enter here." But such has my nature grown to be that of my own accord I am impelled to keep myself in the background. I have the same kind of feeling when thrown in the company of those who are very rich, or those who enjoy great public esteem, or those who live on the heights of prosperity. My nature instinctively shrinks from going to those places where I behold the grandeur of wealth and honour. I do not feel any desire to visit such people.

I cannot and do not feel at ease in approaching three classes of people,—the rich, the renowned and the learned. My sense of duty urges me to go, therefore I go ; duty calls

me to speak in public, therefore I speak. Religion commands, therefore I am able to act. But when I hear no such divine command, persuade myself as I may, my hands become numb, my feet limp, and my eyes close of themselves. If ever I am put in the company of these men, I feel I am not destined by nature to associate with them; I feel I am an intruder in a strange place, My strength fails me; I dare not proceed. My natural graces are lost, a sickly pallor spreads over my countenance; and my head hangs down. If I try to speak, I fear I shall make mistakes in grammar. The one thought that occupies my mind is,—when will this meeting be over, when will I go back to my humble friends and be once more in the old familiar circle? When will I go home and regain my natural ease and freedom? This shyness brings misery with it. I argue with myself, "These people are human, so am I, if I make a mistake, will they be loth to excuse me because they have wealth, rank and learning? Can they take my life? Will they insult me and turn me out, holding me by the neck? It may be that some one may actually drive me out. I fear lest the learned should say to me, "You are not well-read, you do not deserve to be in the society of the learned, you may give discourses on religion, but you have no right to come in where nothing but learning is honoured." It is not that I have never gone to such assemblies, not that I have gone very rarely. The five times that I have gone I have been treated with respect, but fear whispers, next time there may be something amiss. So acute, sometimes, is my fear that I feel as if I am in mortal danger. Great is my shyness, terrible is my fear!

I feel I have not the courage to sit at home by myself. I feel that it is not right for me to entertain the thought of travelling abroad by myself. When I have to go anywhere, I wish to go in the company of ten others. When

I have any work to do, I wish to do it with five others. Who is it that says to me, "Do not go about in the world alone ; do not go to the assembly of men of rank and wealth alone." Is it the voice of God ? No ; it is the prompting of my own nature, with its predisposition to shyness and fear. This nature of mine tell me that a person of such disposition should not go anywhere alone, that it is not right for one like me to do so.

My nature does not want to be alone ; my heart longs to be where it may find kindred souls. When left alone I feel myself helpless and desolate, Whether it be in my own country or in a foreign land. I have marked the nature of my friends, how they go to so many places alone, how they even go out alone in the dark. But this man who has been given so much of moral courage is alarmed when he has to face difficulties of a particular nature, and cannot face them alone. Why should a man who has faith in God have fear ? But then what else can a man do when he is alone in the wilderness of the world ? In such places he cannot help being afraid, even as a little child before a tiger. Here he is surrounded on all sides by enemies ready to spring on him ; and, therefore, he is afraid. In those affairs which have nothing to do with spiritual intercourse, or no connection with religion, there shyness and fear take hold of me. But where there is any connection with divine worship, there fear leaves me though there be ten times greater cause of fear. But elsewhere cry as I may, "Begone shyness, begone fear," they leave me not.

When I see a number of men coming to meet me, my first impulse is to run away. I cannot ask, "How do you do ?" I cannot look at them. If they do not speak first, my embarrassment becomes all the greater. I feel like taking to flight at once and hide myself in a cave. Many big men of affairs often come to call on me ; I ask myself

whether I cannot manage to slip away. Even when my brothers-in-faith come to my house I cannot make myself say a word of welcome. Some go away calling me proud. Some say that I am puffed up with the consciousness of my superior piety ; nay, they do not hesitate to use harsh words against me. When arguments are advanced against me, I realize that I am in the wrong. But no more washing will change the colour of my nature. I fear this natural weakness of mine will not disappear altogether. It may become a little less acute, but it is not likely to leave me altogether. At times I feel even if it does go, what good will it do ? For, I shall never be able to associate with worldly men ; I can have no real union with them, I do not want to enter into any kind of fellowship or relations which is not spiritual.

So here I am, having earned the name of being a proud, vain and egotistical person. But there is no help for it. If you but look at my face when I am with ten others, you will perceive that all the time I am wishing to run away. If there is any talk of the money market I want to take to flight. If the world but stares me in the face, the colour fades away from my cheeks. If it persists in its stare, even the inner man changes colour. If any one indulges in irrelevant talk, I am no more myself ; I sweat profusely, my body becomes numb, so much so that life seems to be ebbing away. There have been occasions when I have thought within myself, why do not these visitors depart ! but I could not speak out. Occasionally men have spoken very rudely to me, but I have sat dumb like a child. When I have to walk to a few men, Indian or European, I prefer to have some of my friends with me. He who has so much of shyness and fear in his nature should not walk alone unattended in the world. Therefore, in my concerns with the world a trusted friend should be always

near to minister unto me in maieutic fashion ; I am fully-convinced that in matters spiritual I must always be in the bosom of God, and in the affairs of the world under the sheltering care of a friend or a maieutic ministrant ! I have always wished that in all worldly affairs my friends would speak for me.

On the one hand, there is all this shyness and fear where the world is concerned ; on the other hand, where religion is concerned, I am as a thundering lion. There I have not the slightest fear of man : there I have never been nor ever will be a respecter of persons. Where my religion bids me be shameless, I can take to dancing ; but were I to try to dance on the stage of the world, I am afraid, even ten years' practice could not make me do it. But where God is, I shall dance with such abandon that people will call me a low vulgar fellow. Let them say so, I am prepared for it. I have done many things betokening utter shamelessness on my part ; I have done them one after another ; in public streets, in riverside landings, and in all sorts of places. When the Divine Mother commands, all shyness and fear vanish. In such circumstances, I treat them as God's enemies and tear them to pieces. In preaching religious truths which run counter to popular beliefs, I will cast off all shyness and fear. I will preach truth in the face of mighty princes and potentates. But elsewhere I know not why I am stricken with fear. He who is a lion in one place is meek as a lamb in another. Such are the contradictions in my nature that at times and places I experience extremes of shyness and fear ; at other times and places I exhibit utter shamelessness and fearlessness !

O Thou, the friend of the poor, Infinite Compassion, no man understands the character and conduct of a person with whom Thou dost disport Thyself ; not even he him-

self. Swayed by the emotions of fear and shyness I turn now to this side, now to the other. Why do I fear the world so much? See, how many men speak ill of me and accuse me. See how this man is regarded as a very conceited person. Wilt Thou not uphold the dignity and honour of Thy protega? He who has absolute trust in Thee, he stands condemned as a conceited person! Lord, Thou knowest it is neither pride nor conceit but shyness. Thou knowest how distressed I become when thrown amongst worldly people, and what palsy seizes my heart then! That state is beyond description. Such shyness and fear oppress me that I cannot utter a word. My brethren and friends now know of the two weak spots in my character. I am not here to justify myself. Men may speak ill or well of me as they like; I am not narrating this gospel of life with an eye to self-justification. Fear and shyness I have them both; but in the presence of those who love God and are devoted to Him I am not afflicted with fear or shyness. If ever they crop up, it is because I am not well acquainted with such devotees. I am brave as a lion before them whom I call my own. To them I wish to lay open my heart; but as soon as outsiders come in, my tongue becomes numb. Thou alone knowest my character, Mother. I do not hanker after praise or fame. I do not believe any harm is done because of my shyness and fear. The world is a dreadful place. How shall I carry on my work in this money-market of a world? I do not go to such places except at the call of duty. Do not cast me into the fire of worldliness. What I love is, the shelter of Thy lotus-like feet, and the company of a few friends devoted to Thee. As Thou hast made me a missionary I have to deal with thousands of people. But I go about trembling like a goat on its way to the sacrificial altar. Thou knowest this man is neither clever nor skilful. Thine the power.

the glory for making such a shy man dance and be fearless in the cause of religion. Even he who is by nature shy and timid is singing the name of the Lord in a thundering voice. Mother, Thou canst do all things ; Thou canst turn a person's shamelessness into shyness, and shyness to shamelessness. The mighty ones of the earth Thou canst render impotent, and Thou canst make the weak so powerful as to strike terror into others by the thunder of his voice. O, how hast Thou transformed me, Thy poor servant ! Temperamentally shy, how he becomes free from it as soon as he enters the threshold of religion,—this is a message of great hope. I beseech Thee with folded hands that all of us may grow in courage ; that for the sake of religion, we may cast off all shyness. One must learn to be recklessly brave in the cause of religion. The time has come when, under the impulse of maddening *bhakti*, we should promenade the streets setting aside all shame. The times are propitious, if we give way to fear now, the New Dispensation will go down to the dust. Having resolved upon dancing, we should not now be shy and draw the veil over our faces. We should not hesitate to carry out God's commands for fear of a false shame. Keeping quite unmoved in the midst of honour or dishonour, we will go on worshipping the lotus-like feet of the Mother. Let people call us shameless and despise us as low ; but such is the blessedness we are now enjoying, we do not think we will be frightened by man's frown. I may continue to be helpless as a child in the world, but in the sphere of religion I will be as a lion. My Mother, my loving Mother, invest me with the crown of glory in the kingdom of religion. Living or dying we must glorify Thy name. Bless me that I may lose all shyness in *bhakti* ; and all fear in faith. I do not care much if shyness and fear prevail elsewhere. Bless us that

being freed from shyness and fear through *bhakti* and faith, we may be holy and happy. Grant us this boon in Thy mercy !

CHAPTER IX

INFLUX OF YOGA : MYSTIC UNION AND AT-ONE-MENT

As *bhakti* (exuberant love of God) has been, in my case, an acquired virtue, so likewise is my *Yoga* (mystic union with God). At the commencement of my religious life I was not a seeker after this mystic union (*yoga*). At that time I did not hear of such a thing as *yoga*, or even knew the term *yoga*; I could not determine the distinguishing characteristics of *yoga*. I did not think I should ever have to take to the path of *yoga*. I should be thoroughly pure, bear a good character, carry out the God-appointed task,—this alone I knew to be religion; this alone I considered to be my duty. Why should I be united with God? Who can be said to have attained that union? I never entertained thoughts such as these, nay, I never turned that way at all. The subject of *yoga* had not then attracted the attention of the Brahmo Samaj, neither was it laid down in any book that it was the duty of a Brahmo to take the practice of *yoga*. A great deal of time had been taken up in the pursuit of truth, asceticism and love. We had practised them for some ten or fifteen years. And, then, by the grace of God, *bhakti* was born in me; by degrees *bhakti* developed into inebriating love of God. As *bhakti* increased I realised that *yoga* was needed to make *bhakti* stable and enduring. Temporary excitement might, indeed, be induced by *bhakti*, but without the staying power of *yoga* it would not last long. If you have faith in God, you need to be one with God (in *yoga*). Why should the two,—the human and the divine—remain separate? Even as the heart should

become the love-mad heart of the devotee (*bhakta*), so should the eye become the eye of *yogi* (the mystic seer) beholding God in everything.

My attention was thus drawn to both *bhakti* and *yoga* ; and I set about to cultivate them. I felt that the spiritual life of a Bramho would be worth nothing without *bhakti* and *yoga*. As for *bhakti* no sooner was it presented in its brilliant colours than hundreds and thousands were entinctured with it ; it overspread the entire Brahmo community (*Samaj*). When I was encrimsoned with *bhakti*, my brethren and friends also caught it ; they took to choral and communal singing, with the accompaniment of the *mridanga*, and with tears of ecstasy, experienced the thrill of devotional fervour. *Bhakti* they imbibed speedily and in good measure ; but *yoga* did not come so soon. *Yoga* is somewhat difficult, its practice is difficult ; its mystic formulary is abstruse. It is difficult to make its working intelligible to oneself. Up to this day, it may be said to be a rare spiritual commodity, very difficult of attainment. Those who have acquired this rare gift of *yoga*, are unable to communicate it to others. When *bhakti* is acquired by one, it soon spreads to ten others ; but *yoga* does not spread so easily. In a whole century, there would be in all only four or five exemplars of *yoga*. I became devoted to *yoga*, but not so the general body of our fellow-believers.

When I felt the need of *yoga* in my life, I perceived that without *yoga* faith was futile, love, *bhakti*, and asceticism were of no avail. Unless the human soul became one with God in mystic union, the blessedness of earthly life is not realised ; this truth led me to the path of *yoga*. Did I take to this path from a study of the scriptures or other books, or from the precepts of instructors ? No, certainly not. In no book had I up to that time found any mention of *yoga*. When, in the guise of the musical instru-

ment, *mridanga*, the gospel of *bhakti* first came to me, no human persuasion or prompting led me to be initiated therein. It was the grace of God that descended on me in the shape of *bhakti*. In like manner the wind of *yoga* came blowing into my soul I know not whence. From one end the wind of divine grace brought me *bhakti*, from another *yoga*. Thus two winds blowing from two quarters of heaven wafted these two treasures upto me. It was after they had come into my possession that I learned to distinguish the one as *bhakti* and other as *yoga*. *Bhakti* sweetens *yoga*, *yoga* transmutes *bhakti* into a holy passion. They were twin brother and sister. The one ministered to establish *bhakti* firmly on the ground of faith, and the other as the handmaiden of God, served to make *yoga* refreshingly sweet and winsome. *Yoga* by itself might have landed me in pantheism; *bhakti* by itself might have begotten superstitions. But in me the garden of *bhakti* was planted on the heights of *yoga*. It was not a garden of dreams nor of fancy, for it was firmly established on solid rock. The two in union made a grand union, and out of this unique combination sprang momentous issues. I reckoned myself exceedingly fortunate in this; for in this country, India, many caught in the grip of austere *yoga* practices, have drowned themselves into the Dead Sea of pantheism; while many others, intoxicated with the devotional excitements of *bhakti*, have fallen into the slough of superstition. I guarded against pitfalls on either side.

Thus anchored in *yoga*, my *bhakti* stood secure. *Yoga* kept my God-vision clear, *bhakti* made my heart overflow with emotion. One eye was consecrated to *yoga*, the other to *bhakti*. And the Lord blessed me mightily. I opened both eyes at once; with one eye I beheld the God of *Yoga*, with the other the God of *bhakti*. With one eye I beheld the One Eternal Reality in wood and water; in flowers and

fruits, in fire and air, in the sun and the moon ; with the other eye I realised that He Whom I saw in all things, was also the Lord,—the exceedingly beautiful God of *bhakti*. He Who is at first realised as the true is afterwards perceived as the beautiful. He Who was the True, the Good, the Beautiful,—the vision of such a one brought in joy and made my life holy. And because of this conjunction of *yoga* and *bhakti* I was saved from many a sin and many a transgression. Where formerly I saw merely wood or stone, there I saw not merely matter but also God.

I did not practise *yoga* much or long to attain this God-vision. I practised *yoga* with eyes open. I looked around and I saw God dwelling in every object, interpenetrating it. In the water, in hills and mountains was He. I looked at water and there I could easily see Him, now floating on it, now immersed in it. I looked at flower and saw Him seated in the midst of the petals ; as in flowers, so in fruits. I looked at the bush and instantly a thrill passed through my frame. I beheld God looking at me ; I heard Him calling me. I drew near and heard Him calling again saying, "Come, come nearer." I went nearer till I came in closest contact and felt I have found God. Thus was mystic union (*yoga*) consummated.

What is this *yoga* ? It is that intimate union with the Indwelling Spirit which translates every sense perception into such a God-vision and God-realization, that wood will no longer be mere wood, nor the sky mere empty space. The sky will reveal the infinite expanse of the spirit world. One Radiant Intelligence will be seen scintillating everywhere ; One Divine Force will be felt actively operating at every point. That the effulgent light of Divine Wisdom is spread over the entire firmament, that Divine Love and Joy pervades all quarters as a cooling, healing balm dispensing peace to all creatures ;—such realisation comes not from

Knowledge and understanding. It is not to be had on order, nor by human striving. It comes as the free gift of God's love. I did not realize this at the beginning of my religious life. At that time I used to worship and pray to God; I used to seek the protection of the Saviour of sinners that I might be delivered from my sins, released from the bondage of sins. But I did not then seek union with God, or cultivate yoga. That, like a conflagration, the fire of Divine Presence fulminates all round us, that like the passage of rushing winds the Divine Spirit may be felt beating against the body,—all these would never occur to my mind. Gradually this perception came to me, but when it did come, how could I let it go? I held on to it.

I said, "Here is God close to me; let me draw nearer to Him." Is He at arm's length? I wanted to see myself sitting by Him. In this way my yoga grew deeper and deeper. Yoga has its measure. Yoga in an hour, yoga in five minutes, yoga in an instant, and yoga as often as one pleases. Mystic union (*yoga*) of this kind I sought to attain without preceptor, without instruction. I vowed to myself never to give it up; to see God in all things as long as I have eyes to see; to hear Him in all sounds as I have ears to hear. And all this has been fulfilled. Now I wonder how could I have at one time lived a life bereft of yoga. The Divine flashes before my eyes, scintillates within me. God can be seen where there is a will-to-see. As sparks fly the moment a flint is struck, so does God, in the twinkling of an eye, make His presence felt in the body, hands, fingers and tongue. I say, "Come Thou, O my God, and reveal Thyself in the fingers of this hand," and instantly the Divine effulgence is seen. I say "Come here, O Lord," and He comes. Many times I have tried this experiment and my God has stood the test by graciously revealing Himself. This yoga (mystic union) how can it exist without *bhakti*

(adoring love)? The yoga that is full of bhakti is sweet, I do not wish to part with it. With the *ektara* (musical instrument) in my hand I practised yoga, rapt in mystic communion. I sang hymns and as I sang, the passion of bhakti surged up mightily making me clasp the lotus-like feet of the Lord in the ecstasy of joy. I realised then that God is not only the God of bhakti, but of yoga and bhakti conjointly; so I took to cultivating them together. My life-chord thrilled with this symphony, a music combined of both yoga and bhakti. It is the note of bhakti. It is also the note of yoga. When these two are one then one attains the God of Joy (*Ananda Swarupa*).

Behold the transformation wrought in my life,—what I was and what I am now ! For the practice of yoga I never repaired to the mountain in quest of a preceptor, nor did I study books for this purpose, or suspend my breath. I had not resolved in my young days that I would become a votary of yoga or bhakti. The *faith* I had in God germinated in yoga ; and the little *love* I had in me assumed the form of an exuberant passion for God (bhakti). I was dry and austere before ; I passed my days in the pursuit of duty, and in various forms of social service. By and by I came to learn the principles of yoga. Formerly when I closed my eyes I saw nothing but darkness ; afterwards I realised that one can see light in the midst of darkness, that one may be companioned even when utterly lonely ; that God could be conjured up from inert wood, and be seen in the water and the sky. The moment you pray crying,—“Come, O Lord, come,” He will reveal Himself.

There are hundreds of Brahmos who may be suffering now even as I had suffered in days gone by. There are many who still ask, “How could God be seen in water and in fire ? That would be gross pantheism.” Can one, like Hafiz, look upon God as a boon companion and address

Him in this wise. — "Hullo, so near art Thou, here in this flower, here within my bosom!" I say, yes; I have experienced this direct vision and perception. I who am now before your very eyes, you may doubt my existence, but as regards my direct vision of God, there can be no doubt whatsoever. My God is now strung together or interwoven with me. Have you not seen God? No other evidence is necessary. If you see me will see Him also. In one soul-substance two substances are united as one. You cannot deny the one and accept the other, You also will learn yoga,—I give you this message of hope. See Him as vividly as an external object. We (men of faith) do not take into account the God of books; we see with our own eyes and then believe. I beseech you, brethren and friends, do not believe in an imaginary god, the god of empty nothingness. Be both a lover of God, (*bhakti*), as well as a mystic seer (*yogi*), and all your wants will be removed.

I was formerly only an active worker; now ascending the mount of yoga I love to walk in the garden of *bhakti*. I cannot make out whether I have now more of yoga or of work, more of the might of conscience or of the joy of *bhakti* as I sing to the accompaniment of the *mridanga*. If I have a full measure of *bhakti*, I have also a full measure of yoga, there is also the same measure of works. I cannot permit myself to neglect yoga-culture because I am devoted to *bhakti*. Both yoga and *bhakti* have been harmonized in my life. Unworthy as I am, even I am privileged to walk in the garden of *bhakti*, on the heights of yoga. O Brahmo brethren, your lives are certainly not as unworthy as mine. When I the least among you have come by so much spiritual wealth, it will be no wonder that greatly endowed as you are, you will win the joys of yoga and *bhakti*. I offer you hope, I give you encouragement. Lay hold of the lotus-like feet of the Lord, and became the votaries of both

bhakti and yoga.

Thou Friend of the poor, Thou Lord of yoga, I have found out from my life that there may, indeed, be many things lacking in one, but they are made up in time. Who could have foreseen that educated in English schools, and imbibing English ideas I should become a *yogi* (a votary of yoga)? But, Lord, following the path ordained by Thee I had to be one. I never so much as dreamt of yoga, or knew anything about it. But after I joined the Brahmo Samaj, Some One shook me up and bade me, "Go cultivate mystic union with God." O Thou, Almighty Father, thus impelled again and again by the Voice, and disowned by the world, I entered into the inner world. O what a wonderful world did I see! As in the outer world, so in the inner could be seen houses, mansions and cities, and rejoicing also in abundance was there. And seeing, I wondered why men do not become votaries of yoga. If I had listened to the advice of men, they would perhaps have told me to suspend my breath, and I would have been led to adopt unnatural means of cultivating yoga. But, Mother, Thou Who hast ordained me to be happy saved me from this error. I took to the path of yoga in a natural way; I got a new lease of life. I found it was as easy to see Thee as to breathe. As vividly as any external object I saw Thee in the stupendous mountains, in the infinite expanse of the sky, and the vision blessed me. To my eye I said, "Be not an athiest that doth not see God." To my ear I said, "Hear thou the utterance, 'I Am,' 'I Am,' as well as many other wonderful words coming from God." Thus in direct vision and audition I began my practice of *yoga*. What a short time I spent over this practice, and yet how quickly did I realize Thy presence in all things! It seemed incredible that an Indian youth with an English education could become a mystic seer (*yogi*). But to my surprise I found

yoga sprouting from the soil of civilized life, yoga flourishing in the atmosphere of love and bhakti. The God who is seen in direct vision I established His reality by psychology. And Thou, O God, hast stood all tests. My Soul break forth into a yell of triumph, my tongue proclaim His victory. My God hast stood all the tests. He whose faith in God rests solely on his contemplation of nature, of the trees and the sky, he may turn into an atheist, but God gave me this assurance saying, "Test Me in every way you like, I am thine and thou art Mine, I place Myself in Thy hands; have Me appraised, take Me to the market place. Cast Me into the fire; keep Me under water, compare Me with what the books say about Me, apply all and every kind of tests." I did test Him and I found my God coming out victorious in all the tests. And then I was convinced, O God, that Thou could'st not but be real.

Who hath seen my God,—the true God? Like unto lighting He flashes and sparkles. O mount Himalayas, bear witness unto my God; O Heaven, rejoice and shower flowers on earth. O True God, Thou burning presence, I have seen Thee; I have heard Thee speak; do Thou speak. I do not believe in a God who is not seen and heard,—for me it is atheism. From my boyhood I have believed in Thee, O Living God. Thou art more real than the mountain. We can clasp Thee to our heart. Thou mayst be seen like fire burning. One may cross the Pacific Ocean, but none can ever transcend Thee. O God, my God, my Lord, I am mystic seer (*yogi*) united with Thee; I behold Thee, even now my soul is immersed in Thee. Speak Thou to every one of us; be a willing captive to every seeking heart. Begone, God of the godless, begone God of fancy, begone God of dreams. I acknowledge no such God. A whiff of breath and the God of fancy vanishes into the air. He is unreal and cannot stand any tests. Come Thou, O my God

my loving God, come Thou consuming Fire, flare up into a conflagration ; and in the twinkling of an eye, make the millions of India's sons stalwart men of faith. O God, my brethren and friends are crying for Thee, reveal Thyself to Them. Since Thou hast initiated the worship of the Formless Spirit reveal Thyself speedily, so that seeing Thee all may turn into men of faith. I will exalt the man of faith, and I shall designate him "the son of God," to him will I say. "Blessed is thy birth, fulfilled is thy destiny." How easy and natural is this God-vision ! What fun, what thrill is there without such a faith ? If I did not attain such a faith what have I been doing these twenty years ? How worthless is that spiritual culture where God is deduced by repeating, like cramming a lesson, the words, "God is here," "God is here" ? Thou can'st be grasped with ease by simply uttering the name,—'Mother'. Thou Treasure of the poor, how easy, indeed, has it been for me to find Thee. I who had nothing to call my own ; now the Divine Treasury is in my treasury, in my Library, yea in my bosom. I am now richer than a landholder, richer than any King. As Thy son I have become heir to the whole universe. Even as the spider enmeshes insects in its cobweb, so with the far flung meshes of yoga I have gathered to my bosom the sun, the moon and the stars. God and the universe, the universe and God, I have incorporated them in me. Blessed am I, blessed are my ancestors, blessed are they who hear these words ! Blessed art Thou, O God. Thou canst make a mystic seer (yogi) of him who was not. O Thou Infinite Mercy, bless us that we may taste the blessed fruits of mystic union in this life by putting our trust in Him who is at once Truth, Wisdom and Joy—*Sachidananda*. Thou Mother of the Universe, Giver of Salvation, do Thou graciously grant us this blessing !

CHAPTER X

THE DYNAMICS OF INSPIRATION : TRANSCENDENTAL AND PARADOXICAL

Very wonderful is the calculus that governs my life. I never believed in the arithmetic which rules the world. I find that its calculations run counter to mine. The quarrel is over the first principles. And yet I have an arithmetic of my own whose principles are intelligible, and which can be explained to the satisfaction of the lovers of God. Its rules and processes are all in order, but men in general do not abide by them nor will they do so for centuries to come.

The customs and manners of the land, the land of Inspiration I come from, do not correspond with those prevailing here. As the people here hold dear their own rules of conduct, so do we our own. Every one is devoted to his own home and land. Who does not wish to glorify his homeland? Ye men of the world, even as you are eager to hold before others, in their proper perspective, the ideals you cherish, allow me to exercise the same right in regard to my own. Speaking of my homeland I must say it is in no way a mean one. In fact, the laws and ethics of our land are of a transcendent order. Therefore have faith, and be prepared to listen to and ponder over it for a little while.

What a marvel of arithmetical science it is, and how it baffles the human understanding! Men in general see in it nothing but error and untruth, and call those who are its votaries fools and mad men. But their judgement cannot silence me. I will declare with all the force at my command that this arithmetic of ours is surpassing wonderful; for according to its rules, if you deduct five from three the remainder is seventeen. If you practise religion according

to this cardinal principle, then in obedience to this paradoxical law of inspiration, there is sure to be spiritual gain and no loss. It is by following this path of spiritual culture that I have been able to plant the banner of victory in open encounter with hostile hosts. It is upon this arithmetic that my spiritual life is founded, to it I owe whatever victories I have had. Whenever following the world's arithmetic, I have five and three makes eight, there I have suffered defeat. But whenever I said, If you subtract much from little, a great deal more is left over, there I have triumphed, or if I deducted a greater number from a lesser, the remainder would be still greater, I have won.

When I felt a house had to be built, I set about it at once the walls rose heavenward, the house was completed, the rooms were decorated with pictures, and then, last of all the foundations were laid. The law of our land, the scientific technique we follow is to lay the foundation last of all. Those who start building a house by laying the foundation first, we call them foolish and take for granted they will never succeed. If we find anyone saying, "How is the temple to be built, the walls raised, the expenses to be met if there is no money in hand?" We at once conclude he is not likely to succeed. As for us, we first ask the Lord, "Dost Thou wish that a house be built?" and if He says 'Yes', we are instantly assured of a four-storied house, rising up in the sky in no time. And as it rises, money comes pouring in, and then the foundation is laid. Be not anxious before you begin an undertaking, not after you have completed it. Neither before nor after, nor at the time you do a thing should you have any anxious thought. Act under divine inspiration. Why should you be anxious at all?

A son or a daughter has to be married, five hundred, or five thousand rupees are wanted. The fool of this world worries how and whence the money is to come. He racks

his brains with deliberations and discussions without end. Five years pass away, but no marriage takes place. He who gave way to anxiety in one thing now worries over every little thing. Where as a citizen of the land I come from, wanting to get a daughter married, simply lifts up his eyes to heaven and asks, "Lord, is this daughter of Thine to be given in marriage?" The response comes, "Yes on the 20th of September". The inspired servant of God immediately puts on the armour of conscience and in a spirit of perfect detachment launches into the enterprise. In due season, in an auspicious moment, the marriage is celebrated without any hitch whatsoever. There was neither bridegroom nor money; in spite of his being thus placed, the servant of God accomplished his purpose. In such circumstances the men of the world worry as to how things will come to pass. But the inspired servant of God says, "God knows how. When He has promised it shall be". The lover of God finds he has not a single pie with him, and yet the Lord commands,—"Five hundred men must thou invite on the occasion and entertain them sumptuously." Thus commanded, he betakes himself to his devotions. Meanwhile, the ceremonial band arrives, and the arrangements for feeding a thousands guests are completed. The marriage is solemnized. The world asks—"How and whence?" Well, the citizens of our land never concern themselves with how a thing can be done but only with how it gets done.

Where just seven rupees and ten men are wanted for a certain purpose, the required amount and number come at the right moment. Whenever and whatever we were in need of and that we received. By what means and in what manner they came to pass who can tell? Heaven alone knows, the earth has nothing to say about it. The man of the world eternally inquires "How?" The reply is always—"Thus" are things accomplished; *thus* do men

come"! When it is found that all men praise a certain course of conduct and that if that course be adopted, all will applaud, the man of God at once concludes it must be bad and will bring about ruination; because the learned will approve of it, the wise will uphold it and men in general will sing our praises, such a thing ought not to be done. On the other hand, where the heart whispers, "Do this", and looking up to heaven I am assured, it is a better course of action, thou good and respectable people, the learned and the rich are calling me mad and are arrayed against me, I at once decide that it must be done. When in setting about a work I find every one will speak ill of me, great will be my disgrace; no one will come to hear me when I go out to preach in distant places, friends, near and dear, will forsake me; my body, mind and intellect will be weakened and wear out, my mind says, "All right, since none agrees with me, therefore, this thing must be taken up". Because, that which excites the antagonism of the world that very thing secures the friendship of God. That which the world turns away from the same is favoured by God.

The work which, the world says, requires a hundred men, the man inspired of God says can be easily accomplished by three men. Where the world says—this work cannot be accomplished by less than five thousand men, the man inspired of God says that if more than five engage in it, it will be undone. The world says, much money, many missionaries and preachers are needed and then only can a religion be spread. The inspired man of God says,—“No five will suffice.” If twelve men enlist, take it to be the maximum number. What twelve men can do, a hundred thousand cannot do. To try to increase the number to thirteen is to invite disaster. Five men can do what five hundred cannot; but if six get in where only five are

needed, it ends in frustration. Therefore, my aim always is to see that only a steadfast few keep together. To swell the number is against the injunction of God. You say, you see five faithfuls in the spiritual assembly! How could there be as many as that in so short a time? It is indeed, a strange spectacle! How could so large a number come together in the space of fifty years? Has God brought together all these men? It is ordained that only an outstanding few like pillars will hold aloft and sustain a religious community. It was the invincible twelve that became victorious on earth. Therefore, a citizen of our land, coming to this world, insists that only a few can form a coherent group. When the inspired Minister of God finds too many people crowding in, he tunes his teaching to a higher spiritual ideal, even as a singer raises his voice to a higher and higher pitch. As a result the number drops from thousands to a hundred. The Minister exclaims—"Still so many men left, and this too, on the pathway of reality?" So, a sterner course of discipline is introduced. Some get disgusted with it, others speak ill of it and depart. When the hundred gets reduced to five, heaven, showers His blessings on these few. Then the Minister says, "We have got the right number at long last!" Cut down, again and again, the original five hundred has come to a remnant of five in whom is concentrated the spiritual power of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In matters that generally cost much anxious thought to men of the world are with us a matter of no anxiety whatsoever. Many are apt to think that my arithmetic is mere guess-work; but it is not so. In the life of one man at least (referring to himself) it has been tested and verified, week after week, month after month, during the last twenty-five years. Whatever triumphs I have achieved in my life have been through not giving way to anxious

thought. Failure is inevitable where a work is undertaken after amassing money for the purpose. I have invariably succeeded when there was no money nor anxious thought. If this be the evidence of an eye-witness, an experimenter of truth, why should not people praise this kind of an arithmetic? Verily I say unto you that by taking thought you cannot ensure the safe-keeping of your property. nor the health of your body. As for the health of your soul, your spiritual welfare, it can never be kept up by calculation. Go wherever you will, filled with the spirit of Buddhistic *nirvana* (extinction of desires) and victory is assured! If you would establish righteousness on earth, live dangerously, taking your stand on that sharp razor-like rocky ledge, overlooking the yawning mountain chasm where the ground may slip away any moment from under your feet!

Do you mean to establish a charitable institution after you have a lakh of rupees at your command? Nay, nay; start the institution at once. Take a yarn out of your garment and consecrating the thread (symbolic of utter self-abandonment) unto the Lord, cry for help. And before the next day dawns, you will find the sun showering as much money as you require. All wealth is God's. It belongs to His elder sons; it belongs also to His younger sons. If you are a son of God, you will never lack money. A drama had to be wiped away, a school had to be started in my native place. I found I had sufficient funds at my disposal and I knew it was a stumbling block in the way of charitable undertakings. A few days passed and I found I had no money at my disposal. I felt this was time for staging the contemplated religious drama. The Presiding Spirit of all times said, "The future carries in its bosom a reserve bank". The lovers of God, knowing that money will be coming at the proper time, boldly set about to work. He who had two lakhs of rupees did not have the heart to

give away even two rupees. He who has nothing, he alone can work wonders.

Why should I not consider myself rich and master of crores of rupees when I know that I am possessed of nothing? My only treasure is God; I am rich, for I possess God. Possessing Him, I can accomplish a thousand deeds. Where others sit brooding, with hands cupped on cheeks, I stand up with hands on hips. Where others boldly go forward, I hesitate to proceed. Where there is so much money on hand as can support two schools, build four houses of worship (*Brahma Mandir*), I somehow feel, where there is so much money, there is poison. For money produces the intoxication of conceit in the possessor. I will not handle Satan's accursed hoard for the purpose of establishing the church of God. But when I find God's money, I immediately accept it lifting it to my forehead. One rupee of God is worth a lakh of rupees. Not till I receive money from God's hands do I dare to use it.

Let only those who are divinely inspired to adopt this method do so, for it carries with it great risks.

Many are likely to come to harm in following this course. For one must be able to divine the intimations of God's Spirit before He follows this method. Many who undertook to do works without taking thought have become involved in debts. Many boasted saying, "Why should we be anxious about money? If we choose we can raise a lakh of rupees by simply writing to people." Thus saying, they soared on the wings of over-confidence, but soared only to fall and sink, and disappear, whereas we soared but fell not. On the other hand, our daring increase by leaps and bounds!

When there is no money and we are hard pressed to meet our expenses, we know it is possible to support a ten-

fold increase in the number of missionaries, and to feed their guests. It is possible because there is no money. For, if hundreds turn up at such a time, Croesus' fabulous wealth will be at our disposal. We need but entreat God with tears. Thus, have I been spending twenty-five thousand rupees, year after year, and I have never incurred any loss. My stall is in a corner of the Calcutta Hay Market, and my business is carried on, as it were, like a suppliant with bits of straw between his teeth (symbolic of humility), but I have never been in want. If a man first resort to prayer, and then, with a bit of straw between his teeth, says that he wants to open a school which will cost five hundred rupees a month, I know by the look of his face that he will succeed. What a monied man cannot accomplish can be accomplished by him alone who will undersand this paradox? How will a man of learning comprehend what only an inspired lover of God can?

Whatever you do without taking thought, whether you undertake some work, carry on a trade or a business, or educate your children, you will succeed; you will attain both wisdom and prosperity, acquire both learning and wealth. Men of the world act after much anxious thought, we do not. We the men of the New Dispensation, can accomplish works of great renown without any money in hand. There, I must needs shout in joy,—“Victory to the New Dispensation!” Men of the world are not able to support even their own family; we support many families without an anxious thought. Fifty maidens are to be married, medicines have to be procured and physicians called in for the sick,—you are not to give anxious thought as to how all this is to come about. No one can do anything by taking thought. The man of the world gives himself up to anxious thought, yet his daughter does not get married, his son remains unemployed, his children die of

hunger. Shame to wordly wisdom ! What prayers can accomplish, learning and hard thinking cannot. What hosts of the rich and learned cannot accomplish, one man of faith can easily do at the command of his living God,—the Defender of the faithful. To demonstrate that this calculus of mine is infallible I will give more proof from my own life, and if there are men of true faith in my community, they too will bear witness to its infallibility. He, who without premeditation and without fear, boldly faces the fiery test of inspiration, will triumph. He who, has stripped himself of everything, he will triumph. Thrust your right hand into the blazing fire, and, then, thrust your left hand, too, into it ; and come out with courage invincible. Filled with divine humility inherit the Kingdom of Heaven !

O Infinite Mercy, Compassionate God, if we act according to Thy dictates, it can be proved that Thou art true and this divine calculus of Thine is true. The wisdom of the worldliwise is not enlightenment but darkness. If we walk in Thy appointed path, the truths, the inspirations that are received by the inner ear seem at first to be untrue, but O Adorable God, they are not. I repeat, they are not. As we press forward in the path of inspiration, we are amazed and bewildered. How Thou hast brought us into a Kingdom where the mightiest heroes could not enter ; What we have accomplished with half a pice, men of the world cannot with a lakh of rupees. We do not worship Thee as often and as fervently as we should, hence we are in want. If we put on loincloth, if like Chaitanya, Moses and Jesus, we forsake all, we can show how a hundred thousand people can be fed with a piece of bread. This I do believe with all my heart and soul. Do we ever entertain the doubt that truth will not be established for lack of funds ? O Mother-heart of joy, only inspire us with courage, and nothing will stand in the way of the establishment of truths

Thy chosen servants will spring up in no time. As for a country like India, here are five or six of us to carry out Thy behest. Surely India will be conquered, and truth established. Had five hundred people stood up for the work, we would have cried out in dismay, "Lord, why such a multitude? Twelve men are found to constitute the core of every religious movement at its first stage. True teachers and preceptors have never exceeded the number twelve. Is all this crowd, then, as spectators in a show? O Lord, rally our forces and concentrate all strength in a chosen few." Why should we now give way to fear? The time for fear is past. We have come to know that by this means only can we become the conquerors of the whole world. All lovers of God who achieved victory did so through prayer and communion. Through prayer and communion they acquired the treasures of heavenly life. How unsubstantial the wealth of this world; we need only Thee as our eternal treasure, we want to love and honour those who are Thine. Enlighten us, give true wisdom to the members of this Church so that like the carefree fowls of the air they may do the work assigned to them by Thee. Working thus, the world will be bought over. Begone, fear of the world; shame to the fighting man's cult of brute force; shame to the organised might of the world's powers and principalities; shame to the power of earthly riches;

The power of God, which has been given us that alone is invincible. Strong in its strength, we will shout, "Victory unto God," and the upper and the nether world will tremble. A handful few will conquer the world. O Gracious One, my Friend and Comrade for twenty-five years, the Truths which Thou hast graciously taught me teach Thou to the assembled friends. May none speak of these truths with ridicule. Putting our trust in these truths, we shall free

ourselves from worldliness, and work in dependence on Thee alone. We have no more any doubts ; no more any wants, for Thou art ours and we are Thine. Thou who art our all in all, when Thou dost befriend us all, wealth is ours, and the whole world befriends us. When Thou dost not help, none else can. We pray that we may find all we need only in Thee. O Merciful Father, bless us that rejecting the crooked and complicated arithmetic of the world, we betake ourselves to prayer and accomplish great deeds of glory before we are called away !

CHAPTER XI

VICTORY ACHIEVED : JOY AND CREATIVITY

When I first opened my stall in God's *Anandabazar*, "Festive Fair" (i.e. started my religious life), I made it a rule that nothing was to be bought or sold on credit. From the very beginning the rule has been to buy according to our means and resources, and sell things on cash. Never for a moment did my mind deviate from this principle. I did not engage in the commerce of religion, believing implicitly in what other people said about it ; I did not claim as my own what was strictly not mine. I never set my hands to things that lay beyond my legitimate sphere. Whatever I personally experienced, what little I had of love, knowledge and belief—that much I put into practice. Thus I had to carry on my commerce with great circumspection ; in course of time my business flourished, and many came to have dealings with me. My business thrived so well because of simple rule of cash payment, followed from the very beginning. I never took into account of what was written in the scriptures, or what so and so said, for I knew if I did so, it would land me in a quandary. I had the fear, and still have, lest I should come to grief in the end by taking things on trust like testing pepper vicariously. From the first my resolution was to learn things at first hand and then to reduce them to practice. Be it asceticism or mystic union (*yoga*), I would not take to any practice at the suggestion of others. I felt it was not right to plunge into the dark, not knowing what it contained or whither it will lead me. I had eyes, ears and hands ; I should see for myself and understand clearly. Was any decision to be made ?

The Divine Mother dwelt with me, let me consult her, the Spirit-preceptor (*Guru*) was my room-mate, let me seek illumination from Him ; my Friend was at my right hand ; let me appeal to Him saying—"Lord, help me."

I should first spend all the money I have in hand, then if a larger expenditure be required the Lord will provide. If afterwards, I come to be a rich man, a big merchant, I will add to my outlay. Arguing thus, I pressed on. I pushed on my trade vigorously, no debt did I incur. God made my small business with a small capital the source of an abundance of wealth and possessions. To those who came to buy I never offered anything on credit. As with men, so with God also, all my transactions were in cash. The prospect of ready payment, the rule not to sell anything except for cash was a God-given injunction. I did not adopt it prompted by any feeling of suspicion or distrust born of greed. At the blessed dawn of my spiritual life, the Lord told me that He Himself works on this principle, that He maketh all payments in cash, and never defereth any payments to the future. Nay, He bestoweth priceless fortunes in ready money. Therefore, I believed that I would get whatever I needed and whatever was possible for man to get. I devoted all my energies to make the most of the living present, I profited by not waiting in expectation of an uncertain future gain. I waited overnight and the next morning I got what I desired. But you will never get what you want if you build your hopes on future gain. So I bowed down to the Lord saying—Thou didst promise to pay me in cash, do it now, I shall wait, I shall get up and go when I receive it from you. In course of time I found that I received every thing I asked for, for myself, my country, mankind and the world.

As regards results or receiving responses, I have heard people say that to get divine response you must wait long.

that often you do not receive it at all, or that it is not within the bounds of possibility. This world is the seed-plot, all fruits are reaped in the next, and lasting good and fame are all posthumous ; ample evidences of such belief found in the scriptures of the world. But in our case, with our limited capacities and efforts, we achieved - results for which many waited long, working day and night till their bodily powers were spent up. Many learned religious reformers, after much toil and suffering in the cause of propagating truth, denied of their expected gain in this world's commerce departed for the next. The seeds they sowed a thousand years ago are bearing fruit now ; we enjoy the fruits of their labour. The times in which we live have taken a favourable turn. Mighty love growing mightier has changed the course of events. We find now that by twenty-five years of sustained labour we reap the fruit of five hundred years, that a whole day's work can now be done in an hour. The seed which used to take many years to grow into a tree and bear fruit after a long time now does so in a considerably less time. Invoking the name of God we set to work, before two years had elapsed, we found an abundant harvest. Vast crowds gathered round us, and from countries far and near people are pouring in to share our heavy responsibilities.

What was the state of things twenty-five years ago, and what has it become after these twenty five years ? No one could have known of such happenings ; no one could have conceived it in imagination. What conflict was there between religion and religion ; how greatly were people addicted to irreligion and vice ; how the religion of the Brahmo Samaj was left to languish, how much were people lacking in love and *bhakti* ; and what a sad want there was of zeal and earnestness in the timid Bengali. But the labours of the last few years have changed the aspect

of things completely. After twenty years of unremitting efforts the prospect of spreading and perpetuating truth has considerably increased. In a country where most good deeds crumble into dust, the religion of the Brahmo Samaj developed into the gospel of the New Dispensation. Not a year passed in which progress was not made ; not a month or a week passed when the spirit of God slumbered and men received not messages from heaven ! Like unto a young lion this New Dispensation has grown in stature till its prowess has shaken and stirred up not only Bengal, but the whole of India. What work was undertaken in connection with the New Dispensation that has not been fulfilled ? No effort was made but has borne fruit ? Great and notable institutions have been established, and the works of minor importance also which the man of faith started in the name of Lord have been attended with success. Now looking up to God,—the Sun of Truth, and inserting my hand as a token of sacrifice into the fire of Truth (inspiration) I can assure you that I have got all that I wanted, and have seen all that was to be seen.

Whosoever opened a stall in the Festive Fair (*Ananda Bazar*) of the Lord made large profits. Whatever transaction I entered into has brought me nothing but profit ; never have I incurred any loss. Nothing daunts me any more, nor can anything hurt me. Whatever account books I open I find that having started with five rupees I made a profit of five lakhs. Thus he who opened his stall in a corner of the Haymarket is now the master of untold wealth. Who can prevent his achieving victory, at whose birth the words, "Victory assured" were inscribed on him, in imperishable characters, by God Himself ? God decreed—
"Behold, there men shall triumph ; they will pick up a handful of dust and it will turn into a handful of gold. Whatever they undertake to do in my name will be for the good

of the world." I have never worked with any selfish motive ! I have not come here to covet a few rupees, but I came smitten with the woes of my country. At the very dawn of my spiritual life the Lord bade me ask a boon. And I (the lover of God) said,—“May I be victorious” ? And the Lord wrote with his own hand, “Victory is assured to my votary”. Now I am convinced that whatever is undertaken in loving faith is sure to succeed.

So many wonderful instances in proof of this are now accumulating that one cannot keep count of them. I challenge my opponents to answer me,—was ever any work commenced in connection either with the Brahma Mandir, or the the Brahma Samaj of India, or the New Dispensation which has not been fulfilled and borne fruit ? The swelling chorus of the Lord's name (*Harinama*) fills the air of the land. See what has come to pass ! A country where drunkenness was on the increase, has become inebriated with the sweet name of God sung in the spirit of Chaitanya. Whoever thought that the men of this country, after receiving English education, would, like the humbler classes, go about singing songs to the accompaniment of the *mridanga* ? Whoever knew that at a time when scepticism and atheism were overtaking us, and unbelief like a deluge was inundating the land, the young men of Bengal, with eyes closed in rapt communion, would exclaim, “Behold we have found God ; We have clasped to our bosom the Beloved of our hearts, the Lord of all ! We have not only witnessed such phenomenon ourselves, but have shown to others as well. The worshippers of the Goddess of Power (*Shaktas*), and the worshippers of the Goddess of Love (*Vaishnavas*) are now reconciled, and their respective dieties, Kali and Krishna, now sit together. The lover of God now sees Kali in Krishna and Krishna in Kali. By the alchemy of the new Faith, Power is now transmuted into Love, and Love

is adored as Power. In Bengal, the devotees of these two rival communions, through religious mutuality, are being leavened into one whole. The shrine of the votaries of Power will now unite with that of the devotees of Love to form the Golden Temple of the One God. The love that people cherished for God as Mother is now being offered to God as *Hari*, and the worshippers of *Hari* likewise offer their heart's allegiance to God as Mother. By the will of God the two have become one in the New Dispensation. The labours of twenty-five years are now bearing fruit.

What a hold did caste and various other superstitions have on this country before, and how often did my heart weep on that account ! How have I cried out in the agony of my soul,—“O where is the spirit of Sri Chaitanya ? O where is his love transcending all caste distinctions ?” But with every drop of tear shed, a rich harvest covered millions of acres. All these, came about not through my own merit, but because I clung to the feet of the Lord. Therefore, I say again, a handful of dust in our hold is transmuted into a handful of gold. The chanting of the name of the Lord has found its way among the *elite* and the enlightened, and the spirit of the seers and sages of old (*muni-rishi*) has re-appeared among the young men of Bengal. How much did we pray to God for this ? And in answer to these prayers and entreaties the Lord's grace is bringing all these things to pass. Therefore, do we say that we are always blessed with immediate profits, ready results.

Some service has to be rendered to the country. That it may not end in failure on account of ten thousand people enlisting, the number is focussed in the faithful few. Now I see nothing but good prevailing on every side. The chanting of God's name, how it is in the ascendant. In the course of twenty-five years the face of the country has

assumed a quite different look. If now the number of our enemies increase, if the flame of opposition blaze up, and danger threaten to overwhelm us, we fear not. For we were born to be victorious. We never lost a fight. In all the big battles that we fought, amidst all circumstances, favourable or otherwise, that befell us everywhere victory waited on us. The Lord laid His hand on us, and we became invincible. We have had abundant proofs of His love, and all round us memorials of glory have been set up. "How little have you laboured, and yet I have blessed it with tenfold returns." How otherwise could we have got on at all if such were not the case? Profit always ready for the asking! For we are day-labourers living upon our daily wages. Knowing that his words would not sound sweet to us, that we could not continue in His service on mere promises, He has made this arrangement of cash payment for our sake. Having got a tenfold return, I wish I could again be as a youth in my old age and shake Bengal to its foundations by Herculean labours. Indeed, I feel as if ten million youths are entering into my body, and, thus rejuvenated, my eyes blaze with the fire of rekindled enthusiasm. O the glory of sacrificing this life in the service of the Lord!

Much as I have been hurt and persecuted, trodden under foot by many, I feel no harm has come to me. Thrice blessed be the Lord that for me there has been always nothing but gain. Whatever I have done has drawn thousands of people to the Supreme Spirit. Even if I now shut myself up in my room, I know ten thousand people will be invoking the man of the Lord. The moment I cried out to my God, "Have I not wept and prayed to Thee for this transformation?" Instantly the Lord showed me in the city of Calcutta the beatitude of the ancient city of God (*Brindaban*) with its drama of divine love on the banks

of the Jamuna. Do I regret I have not been given riches and earthly prosperity? Do I grieve because I have got no estate or landed property? No, for I am verily the servant of God; and whatever belongs to my master belongs also to me, His servant. Indeed, the whole universe has passed into my hands. Was I born ever to suffer defeat? So long as this tongue of mine retains its power of uttering the name of God, it will never succumb. Though I am poor in other respects, without riches and honour, without much spiritual culture and devotional fervour, yet the power of God's holy name is upon me and community. Lo! I see Sri Chaitanya dancing in our midst. Having witnessed all these with my own eyes, how can I disbelieve them; This devoted of God never met with defeat; under no circumstances has he suffered defeat. He has been invariably successful. Say, what more do you want to know? Victorious, I have carried the waving banner, bearing the name of the Lord, in triumphal procession through the streets. Yet was I never puffed up with pride. By the power of God's men like you and me can do everything. Yes, by the spell of God's name we would pick up this world as if it were an earthen platter and hurl it flying into heaven.

Because we are the meanest among men contemptible creatures, therefore, is there still so much misery and degradation in our midst. But even in the midst of the degradation I have seen that the meanest and worthless stuff, taken in hand turned into gold the moment the magic name of God was pronounced. Habitations sprang up in the wilderness. The New Dispensation is making its way in the hearts of even those who opposed it. The Hindus and the Christians are becoming attached to one another. Krishna and Christ are being brought together in spiritual union. The old and the young are being bound together by ties of loving fellowship. A thousand avenues of progress

and improvement are being thrown open. O people of Bengal, make haste while there is a fair wind blowing. Come hither to the riverside of *bhakti*. Unfurl the sails and launch your boat. If such mighty deeds could have been wrought through one sinner like myself, how much more can be done towards magnifying the name of the Lord if a thousand good men like you could unite. Our country should not be allowed to remain stationery. The chariot of progress and purity waits for you; carry the glad tidings to all men and women. Who dare deal destruction on our heads? Who dare lay hand on these immortal souls? Being invincible yourselves take Bengal with you to heaven!

Thou Refuge of the Poor, Thou Saviour of India, how full is the measure of happiness ordained for us! People say, the world is a place of trials and tribulations. If we sow seeds, the rains fail us and the sun dries up everything. Many such tales of woe have we heard. Even those who spend their whole time in pious exercises and in conversing about Thee, they too, spoke a great deal about fear and retribution. But by Thy grace we never believed we could incur any loss or suffer defeat at anybody's hands. Sure of the power of God's name we fought on not caring if we live or die. Can a man who fights with satan, clad in invincible armour, be put to death? If it were so, tigers would have devoured the child Dhruva seeking God in the jungle. But such a thing never happened, never can happen. Therefore, like Dhruva, I repeatedly called on God (*Hari, Hari*) when ever danger threatened. See, Mother Divine, how having achieved victory, I have become sovereign over so many kingdoms! See, how those who used to shun me as an untouchable have now come to crave my hospitality. See, how those who pelted us with potsherds, drawing blood from our forehead, have now come to us entreating, "Where

is your Divine Mother? Show us that we too may worship her. We fought against the New Dispensation, and have shed the blood of God's children : now we have come round to pay homage to your Divine Mother." Mother dear, whatever else comes from Thee in future, victory hast Thou given us. Up goes the banner of victory. Thou hast showered victory on us. We thank Thee, Mother, for this blessing. How great is the happiness Thou hast bestowed on Thy poor sons and daughters ! We did not have to carry on the commerce of religion on credit, we did not have to bide our time, in forest retreats, in the hope of achieving an uncertain victory hereafter. How many men are held up in the blind alley of uncertainty, looking for a victory which will never come ? It is a matter of great joy that we did not have to follow such an uncertain course. We have found our heaven right here on this earth. Our heaven of certitude is within and around us. Bengal is in throes of a spiritual rebirth. Where the name of God had lost its power and charm, people now sing His name to the accompaniment of *mridanga*. The young and the old are now trying to excel one another in devotional dancing. The people are shouting and contending as to who shall excel in loving devotion to God. O God, what had I witnessed before and what do I witness now ? By worshipping Thee—the Living God—we have gained immensely. The magic power of this divine treasure (the new worship) no tongue can adequately describe. What treasures await us in heaven do not concern us here, what we have already got fills us with joy abounding. We have touched the lotus-like feet of the Lord. A great work of reformation is going on in this country, and vast numbers are joining us. Great improvements are taking place. The exclusiveness of party spirit is crumbling down, the distinctions of caste, sect and time are being swept away. Who can fully

describe all this ? O Lord, kindle Thou the light of true-faith in our hearts that the Iron Age of India may change into the Golden Age, that the Dark Age (*Kaliyuga*) may give way to Truth's millenium (*Satyayuga*). The light of the full moon floods the face of India. O, what a glory has descended upon our poor motherland ! Blessed, indeed, is India. Infinite Compassion, bless us that we may, confident of victory, spread Thy New Dispensation everywhere with wholehearted zeal. Graciously confer this blessing on us.

PART THREE

CHAPTER XII

THE TWO PROCESSES *REFLECTION AND REALISATION*

One instant the mind breaks up a substance and cognizes its constituent elements by the reflective process, the next it apprehends it reconstructed as a whole. In regard to spiritual matters also the apprehension through the reflective process and creative realisation is constantly going on. As in the material world substances disintegrate into atoms and atoms reintegrate to constitute wholes, so in the spiritual world the mind is always functioning in terms of reflection and realisation. In some minds the reflective passion predominates, in others the creative. Some are intent only on breaking up a certain substance in thought or on studying an isolated mental content, or reflecting on the qualities of an object one by one. On the other hand, some do not like to turn towards reflection at all ; they would like to have the realisation of the undivided whole. They say, "How long shall we think of the abstracted qualities one by one ? How long shall we continue to behold a perfect whole split up and atomized ?"

In my nature is to be found an attempt to effect a dynamic balance between these two processes. It cannot be said that the two processes were harmonized in me at one and the same time. Like the majority of mankind, I, too, in the beginning was in favour of a one-sided or abstracting attitude toward things. My sole endeavour was to understand everything in its minute and discreet form. The desire to understand things one at a time was

uppermost in my mind. At the very first my sole endeavour was how to get rid of sin, how to be free from evil propensities. Then, for some months, the one ruling idea would be how I could fulfill my destiny in the service of the people. Again, for a time, my ruling passion would be to rid my self of selfishness, and be immersed in philanthropic activities. At one time I would cherish a love for learning, then again I would develop a distaste for it. Sometime I could not experience any pleasure without books, at other times I turned away from them. Both these opposite tendencies were in me, but I took to them one at a time. At one time I cultivated asceticism, at another holiness, and then again love,—in successive periods. Of the attributes of God, the very first was that of Divine justice to stir me to the depths. As I looked for justice in the other world repentance for my own sins swept through me with irresistible force and fury. Long afterwards the attribute of God's mercy in place of justice, and of love and *bhakti* in place of penitence surged up within me.

There was no desire as yet for laying hold of all the attributes of God at one and the same time. Thus passed my days, swayed alternately by the demands of onesided culture. As yet I felt no love for the undivided whole, the Indivisible Reality. I used to think that I could neither comprehend the Undivided Whole, nor needed to do so. The whole storehouse of remedies for the ills of life was spread out before me, but I had no eye for the beauty of the totality. The ideal of the New Dispensation not having come, the sense of perceiving beauty, the capacity for apprehending the rounded perfection of the whole had not been born. My condition was like that of a sick man. My case was serious, very urgent were my wants, each demanding redress, and so my hands were stretched forth for the particular remedy that would help and cure me.

But some-where at the back of my mind the pull of the manysided whole was felt side by side with my preoccupation in the extremes of one-sided culture ; so when at last relief and restoration came, I wondered at the marvellous mechanism of human nature. The incidents which had succeeded one another in dull, prosaic fashion seemed suddenly transformed into the rhythm and beauty of an epic (poem). I discovered how apparently unconnected elements were all being brought together in accordance with some predetermined law and pattern. When I had occasion to worship God as Force (*Shakti*), I brought as my *bhakti* offering the red hibiscus flowers (¹*Jaba*), when I wanted to worship God as love I offered the Basil leaf (²*Tulsi*) . with *bhakti*. I discovered afterwards that these chance offerings (symbolic of opposing cults) were being somehow strung together like a flower garland by Some Unseen Hand. Originally the desire did not arise in me for stringing them all together in the New Dispensation but later I found that Some One had been doing the very things in my nature,

Who ever knew that Jesus should be honoured and accepted in the Brahmo Samaj? Again, when I felt I could not do without paying my loving homage to Sri Chaitanya, I at once repaired to Navadvipa, brought him thence and installed him in my heart. When I felt the need for Buddha I immediately brought him from his seat under the *Bodhi* tree into the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of my soul. Whoever dreamt that these three—Jesus, Chaitanya and Buddha should be thus brought together? Whoever thought that the Lord would thus bring them one by one

(1) *Jaba*—This blood-red flower is the traditional offering to the blood-desiring goddess of *Shakti*.

(2) *Tulsi*—*Ocimum sanctum*—This leaf is the traditional offering to the God of love, *Vishnu*.

and build up a community of saints and prophets? It never occurred to me that some one was working out His Mysterious purpose in my life.

As for me, prompted by the exigencies of the occasion and the inclination of my heart, I took hold of the one thing needed at the time. But there was in my heart the root principle of effecting a harmony between reflection and realisation. The mind, the attention cannot be kept focussed on one exclusive idea or sentiment for any length of time : to this day I find this characteristic trait of attention as strong as ever in me. I could never restrict myself for any length of time to the cultivation of only one quality or attribute. For instance, to guard myself against sin, I would take to the contemplation of Living Justice. If after a time I found myself still preoccupied with the culture of justice, I would conclude that such a course would turn out to be permanently one-sided and defective. And, immediately, I would turn to the compensating attitude of love. Absorbed in the contemplation of love, I would put on a smiling countenance and radiate joy day and night. Again, my mind would say 'such exuberant feeling is not good,' and admonish me not to run too far in one direction. Once more I would return to the contemplation of the complementary quality of justice. Thus whenever I found the boat of my life drifting into a side-channel I would pull it up again by a counter-movement. All through life I have been constantly trying to establish myself in that dynamic centre of stability, that middle way rooted in nature, which is secured by maintaining a vital and "mobile balance" of divergent principles and diverse personalities.

When through overmuch study I found my mind being strangled to death by rank intellectualism I immediately began to devise means by which I might regain the spirit.

of the child and acquire simplicity. Whenever I apprehended danger of lopsidedness, of acute tension in one direction I ran to the opposite. Thus there is perpetual struggle in my mind to keep the dynamic balance of opposites speeding to their union in the Infinite. This principle has been found to hold good in my own case as well as in that of others. Whenever I found the spirit of industry and activity becoming predominant in the Brahmo community, I thought it proper to divert its extraverted energy into the channel of inwardness and spirituality. And, lo, in the course of a few weeks I found the active (members or individuals) turning into the contemplative. Having abstained from outward activity the community was enjoying the deep joy of meditation, of direct communion with God. Again, when I found that engaged in meditation the Brahmo brethren were becoming woefully oblivious of the duty of ministering unto others, I proceeded forthwith to summon conscience to the leadership of the community, and guide it along the right path. As other people's minds are constituted like mine, it was natural for them to react in the same way, that is, to go from each one-sided stand-point on to its opposite. Though much of our time was taken up in this way, we have nevertheless, been advancing towards a transcendent harmony, the harmony of opposites, even the New Dispensation wherein the balanced opposites reaching outwards the apex of perfection, meet in the Divine Whole.

We have now advanced towards the New Dispensation. That means we have quit hugging a one sided course in religion, and are reaching towards perfection, towards the whole man in his manysidedness and comprehensive character. The New Dispensation which the Lord vouchsafed for the good of my country, my motherland, means nothing more nor less than perfection, of the integral whole man was

implicit in my mind. Long since there was inscribed in my heart the golden precept of the great *Rishi* Jesus, "Be ye perfect like unto God." I have always felt I could never subscribe to one-sided ideals. The attributes of God are all infinite perfect. In Him dwells the fulness and perfection of the attributes of detachment, love and joy. His perfect detachment is commensurate with his joy. Not so in me. When my asceticism increases my joy decreases ; when I am inebriated with joy, my detachment suffers decline. As for realizing God's presence I see Him perhaps not so much in water as on land. I see Him in one part of creation but fail to see Him in another. I see him in saint but not in sinners ; and yet both are equally the children of God. Shall I behold only the God of Jesus but not of Buddha ? O deluded man, will you set your wits to work so that you may contrive to receive the one and reject the other from the chamber of your heart ? You think that the love of Sri Chaitanya will gladden your heart, but the searchlight of Christ's conscience will not make you happy. Ah ! is it because you still harbour secret sins in your heart that you want to keep out Jesus ? You sanctimoniously chant the name of Sri Chaitanya so that, drugged by a spurious *bhakti*, you may not have to come face to face with your sins ? Lulled into self-forgetfulness you hanker after an illusory happiness ; therefore is it that you take to this subterfuge of one-sided piety.

One-sidedness has no longer any hold on my mind. If I love some one more than another, I feel I have offended the latter. If I instal Sri Chaitanya in my heart and slight Buddha I feel that the latter must have taken it to heart. Do I honour Sri Chaitanya and cast away Jesus ? It is because I am a Bengali Hindu that I love Sri Chaitanya and do not care for Jesus, a foreigner ? The Hindu seers and sages of old used to sit on tiger-skins and were clad in the

mendicant's yellow robe. So, lest it be an affront to ignore them, I hastened to their forest retreats, adopted the tiger-skin and the yellow robe saying,—“O Hindu seers, dwelling in harmitage, shall the refinements of modern civilisation stand in the way of our paying you due honour? Come here and now in this nineteenth century, we will love and honour you.” Thus saying I paid my heart's homage to them. Now whenever I welcome any one of the saints then and there another invariably comes in. Marvellous is the absorbent and unifying power of the heart. The Living God who indwells it, makes it play the roll of Narada, symbolic of the presiding genius of *bhakti* in the heart, so that whenever he is asked to bring in one saint or truth, he goes round extending this invitation to all saints and all truth. I could never make my heart accept only one saint or truth. In welcoming one I have, perforce, to welcome each and all. It is as if Jesus and Moses and the rest are linked together in an indissoluble organic unity. It is this new and unique element of interconnectedness in my experience that inspired me to rename this new development of the Brahmo religion as the New Dispensation. Others may compromise with one-sidedness but such a thing is impossible for those of the New Dispensation. When I have found in my personal experience that the exclusive acceptance of one prophet or truth does not absolve us from the vice of onesidedness, it is imperative that this new development of the Brahmo religion should, henceforth, be presented to the world as the New Dispensation of God.

Arrived at maturity now, I found all the previously acquired one-sided standpoints strung together into a beautiful whole. How did all the prophets and all truths come to be gathered together in my life like a bouquet, One day

came the Rishis, another day Nanak of the Punjab, the next Kabir of the United Provinces. One by one they all came, —Jesus, Chaitanya and the rest. And he who had been working within me He bade them take their allotted seats. As regards the repertory of disciplines, now repentance, next good works, then asceticism, then joy : sometime the gravity of age, another time the playfulness of the child, again, the enthusiasm of youth, all these came one by one. He who had been at the root of my life, He having got together all the gems of the spirit, strung them into a necklace, and put it round my neck. Thus the divine indweller made me realise the beauty of this world and the next, so that the two worlds became as one and sitting at home, I enjoyed heavenly bliss on earth. Creative realisation and reflection like two different musical instruments struck up their diverse notes which, rising one after the other, have blended into one. The instruments combined to form as one instrument and produced a melodious harmony.

Now I seek only completeness, wholeness. It is towards perfection, towards the whole man that I am pressing on, and pressing on unceasingly. There were others, friends and brethren, who at one time wanted to run the race with me, but who came to a halt on the way. Fortunate am I that I never stopped on the way, but ceaselessly pressed forward. The Lord bestowed on me the name 'Pilgrim', 'Wayfarer', when He sent me to this world, and intimated to me that there would be no halting place to rest in. So I press on. I pressed on despite the rains, I pressed on during the winter heedless of the inclemency of the seasons. I ran in my boyhood, I ran in my youth, and I shall have to run even after death. The eternal progress of the soul in the path of perfection, envisaged in the New Dispensation, must fulfil itself. May those who started on this pilgrimage with me prepare for a further advance, for there

is yet much that is lacking, much to strive for. Brethren and friends, we have to advance with our eyes fixed on the perfection of God. Insult no longer the God of perfection by espousing a one-sided, imperfect ideal, thus tearing out the very heart of the New Dispensation.

Thou Friend of the lowly, Thou Perfect God, even we in our earlier, immature stage split up religion into exclusive cultures by our one-sided attitude, the whole world has all alone committed the same blunder. The various denominations took to the culture of some particular aspects of manysided religion, hence there is so much disharmony in the world. When we were within the fold of Hindu orthodoxy, when we were immersed in dark unbelief, we too, were taken up with one sided ideals. Now we are convinced that having assimilated each and all of the diverse complementary ideals, we have to attain harmony,—perfection. From the time that the light of the New Dispensation first dawned upon my mind I have always had the fear lest in accepting Jesus I send away Chaitanya,—the beloved of my heart : lest in attaching myself to Justice I sacrifice *bhakti* ; lest by enthroning one brother in my heart I do away with another : lest by making a present of golden ornaments to one sister I drive away another sister. I can no longer do any such thing. If I honour Jesus ignoring all others, I feel miserable when I look within, and notice that Jesus, too, is grieved : for I have lavished such extravagant honours upon Jesus as to banish all his brethren from my heart.

Thou God of all perfection, in Thy Kingdom love is all embracing. Thy true children long to live in love and amity each putting an arm round the other's shoulders. Thy love dances hand in hand with Thy Justice. All thy attributes are harmonised in Thee. Like various

shades merging into one another. I have seen seven colours (attributes) blend into one. I have seen how marvellous is the beauty of the New Dispensation. Bless me that I may behold thee in Thy perfect form, behold Thee with Thy vast world-family, behold beauty in its perfection. Then only will my laments cease. How lamentable, indeed, is the conduct of people on all sides. Some are engrossed in their sins, others pursue the phantom of pleasure. Some sit at home idolizing their Jesus, others go mad over their Chaitanya. Some take to the active side of their personality, and sacrifice all other aspects for it : others take up conscience as their only ideal and turn away from other essentials of their character. It breaks my heart to have to see such disharmonies, such one-sided developments and loyalties. O God, grant that henceforth wheresoever I turn my eyes I may meet only the undivided whole. Nay all our love and purity well up at the sight of the Undivided Spirit, May we gladden our minds and souls by the hallowed vision of all the saints and prophets as members of one body. To meet only two or three members of this body brings no rest or peace to my soul. Now that, at this maturer stage, Thou hast vouchsafed to us the New Dispensation, we wish we could become as perfect even as it is perfect, for those who believe in the New Dispensation long for perfection. We no longer wish to see Thee divided, nor accept Thee as such. Children of the perfect, the Undivided, shall we accept Thee split up into intellectual abstractions? Come Thou perfect God my heart will be Thy throne. II Thou hast to come, come, I beseech Thee, as perfect power, perfect wisdom, perfect love and perfect holiness. O God, do not keep me waiting longer. With extended arms I await to embrace Thee in Thy undivided form, (*Akhanda Sachidananda*), Him Who is

Truth, Wisdom and Joy. We get that which we long for. He who seeks the divided spirit finds it ; he who seeks perfection seeks the Divine Mother in the fulness of Her perfections. I pray for all mankind, that there be no more a one-sided religious ideal on earth. Nay all religions harmonize into one religion.

O, when shall we embrace the New Dispensation with our whole heart ? May all the attributes of God shine in our hearts with the splendour of myriad suns, and may we be overwhelmed by it. May we lose ourselves in the Infinite. No more shall we sit wailing on the banks of the Ganges (as is done during mourning time) over lifeless form of the dismembered Mother. Chanting the name of the Perfect God we shall attain perfection. I see no hope of salvation without the attainment of perfection. When I am fascinated by The beauty, Thou sayest to me. "Child, why art thou not moved by my goodness ?" "When I meditate on Thy goodness alone, Thou sayest, Does it not seem strange that the child should have an eye only, for the Mother's goodness and not for Her beauty ?" When I admire Thy ornaments Thou sayest, "Is not my dress exquisite ? If, again, I admire Thy dress, Thou sayest, "Why undervalue my ornaments ?" When I say, 'Dear Mother, how wonderful is Thy attribute of Justice ?' Thou dost at once reveal Thy Infinite Love saying 'Is my love any less ?' When I extol conscience, Thou sayest, 'Is *bhṛkti* in any way inferior to conscience ?' O Merciful Mother, Thou hast always reproved me and put me to shame. As often as I have approached Thee, never have I succeeded in securing Thy approbation. Tell me, Mother, what am I to do ? One-sided culture does not satisfy my heart. Show me the way to attain perfection. Let them also who are so far content with one--

sidedness, wake up all and bewail their lot like us. Direct us all to the supreme heaven of certitude (*Vaikuntha*), of fearlessness. Bless us that we may remove all our wants and shortcomings by embracing the religion of perfection, and be filled with the joy of perfect holiness.

CHAPTER XIII

TRIUNE NATURE ; *THE CHILD, MADMAN AND INEBRIATE*

A little reflection will convince one that the life-stuff of a man of faith is not homogeneous. It is composite-material ; an amalgam of three different elements will be found therein. If you ask me how I found that out, I reply that by reflecting upon my own life I found there were three basic elements in it. It is not that I began life with any premeditation, consciously combining these three elements. My life-stream had gone its accustomed course for a considerable time ; long afterwards having probed into it, I concluded that it was not homogeneous. On a closer examination of my life material I came to know of what elements it was composed. Three persons are present in my life. three natures shine forth through it, three types of character are harmonized in it ; three different elements are held in union in it. One is the child ; another the madman, the third the inebriate.

It will be evident to all that the natures of these three differ from one another. We need not reason much or study scriptures to understand them : their distinctive characteristics are early undertood. Blessed are they who have combined the three natures in their character. By a union of these three wonderful wisdom, love, purity and salvation can be attained. If we leave out any one of them, our character remains imperfect ; as if God has decreed that unless the three constituents be combined, no good and happy life, no good and happy family group could be formed. Mysteriously and little by little these three ingredients are mixed up in the life.

of every man of faith. The more one cultivates his spiritual nature (in obedience to the inner voice), the more childlike he becomes ; the more he plunges into the deeps of devotions (in the spirit of *voga*) the more like a mad man he becomes ; and the more he tastes of heaven through dance and song (in the spirit of *bhakti*), the more an inebriate he becomes. In the early stage of the religious life, there is observed but little of the childlike spirit, the symptoms of madness and the nature of the inebriate in the life of the novitiate ; but as his spiritual experience matures, these qualities become more and more pronounced.

Naturalness is the characteristic of the child, and it is easily discerned. When a man acquires the child-spirit, he cannot mix anymore with old people. A withered and wornout state becomes to him an object of indifference and repulsion. He loves to be in the company of children ; his heart is bent on play. The more I find that simplicity is becoming natural, that agedness, crookedness and deceitfulness are becoming exceedingly hateful, and that more than before, I am willing to open my heart to others, the more I feel myself a child. The more I try to appear advanced in years the gloomier I look. If with the increase of years I also dispense with strength, courage and energy, I gradually become dull and inactive till all incentive to work is lost. The more I feel this to be the case with me, the better I understand that I am no more young but have grown old.

From a study of the gospel of my life, I am convinced that with advancing years there has been an increase of the child-spirit within me. I do not feel that I am ageing. Conforming to the current erroneous standard of calculation I have to admit that I am old. But, in reality, according to the calculations of our homeland (in the spirit) I find I am

growing younger and becoming more childlike. If you do not at all admit so much, you should at least admit that I am not ageing. When the day begins to dawn at half-past four, do we take into account the difference of a minute or two? No, not at all. Five minutes to five, and eight minutes to five, do we take this difference as of much account? Thirty, forty, fifty, or even sixty years of our earthly life are but a moment by the side of the millions of years of the life to come. A moment's difference is really of no account. Suppose a child is a year and a half old, will four days more make much difference in its age? I consider myself just like a child of a year and a half. In the field of work, where I shall labour for millions of years, I am wholly a child. I am just come into the world; it is not yet time to think of death. Verily, a year or a century of one life-span is but a second by the clock of eternal life. Why be anxious that thirty or forty years passed away? When people of the world say, an old man of eighty has passed away, men of our homeland (in the spirit) say, a child of two (years) has passed away. When people here say he went running fast, our fellow-countrymen say, he went crawling. One does not become old by the mere decay of the body; it is the simplicity of the heart that constitutes childhood. It is the heaven within the heart that is heaven indeed. May God preserve it in us.

Childhood may also be known by the company one keeps. I am a liar if I say that I have ever sought the company of old men. I seek only the company of the child; I kiss the child; I place my cheek against his. I would take the dust of his feet. The child is as a rose to me; he reminds me of heaven. I wish I could always be in the company of children. What do I think when I see those old men who are preparing, as it were, for their last pilgrimage to the crematorium? Why, I think they are deliber-

ately bringing upon themselves the infirmities of old age.

Hear, ye, if there be any who have ears for the gospel of life. By constantly calling 'Mother', 'Mother', the spirit of the child is induced. But by worshipping God as the King of kings, you are likely to grow old. So long as you worship the Mother, you never become old, nor ever will. As long as I remain in the lap of the Mother and feed on the milk of Her breast, I shall surely continue to be a child in spirit and shall never become old. And when I pass on to the next world, I shall enter into school, and learn anew that the only secret of spiritual life, the only gospel-truth for us to learn, is to call upon God as our Mother.

This ingredient of the child-spirit is within me ; and with it also is the ingredient of the madman. There is no community of thought and feeling between the madman and the world. What is north to the world is south to him. The literature, the psychology and the arithmetic of the madman are all of a novel kind, and contrary to those of the world. It is not right to follow and be like the men of the world. We ought to be like the madman, and be constantly doing such things as would make the world say that they are not the doings of sensible people. Seeing us do things contrary to all reasonable expectations people will ridicule us as crazy and insane. The madman is guided by an altogether different scriptural code. Worldly men, when they hear of it, only laugh at it ; but the people of our homeland (in the spirit-world) the more they read it the more are they delighted. The madman does not regulate his actions by considerations of worldly loss and gain ; but in a thousand matters he goes the way which brings the loss. Worldly men walk on earth, the madman wants to walk in the firmament. He would build his house on his fantasy alone. The men of the world consider themselves rich when they have millions, the

madman considers himself rich when he has nothing at all.

You cannot help laughing when you see a madman. I would count myself blessed if there be anything in my life that would excite the laughter of the world. In fact, the world has found many things that constitute the golden portion of my life, while things that are contrary to the spirit of madness are but as "Iron ore." The more I forget the world like the madman, the happier I feel myself. When I find prudence gaining upon me, I fear I am going to be worldly-minded; and I wonder into what company I have been thrown. I feel ill at ease in company of the worldly-wise, and become anxious to get away. I shudder to look upon the paths which the astute men of the world follow. I do not want to go to those sordid places where they assemble; even if some business take me there, I wish I could withdraw from their company. Once madman seeks the company of another, just as a prudent man seeks his like. As long as you stay with a madman you will find him muttering incoherently to himself. The madman does not like to cast his eyes on those who work with a thought for the morrow. Where, then, does he turn his eyes? Towards the haunt of madman,—towards the asylum of lunatics. He has his eyes on and wants to go to the place where other madmen are dancing,—"Lord, Lord, Hari, Hari". Thus the child danced his dance within me, and with him danced the madman. The spirit of the madman has now attained its maturity in me. If now I worship God as the worldly-wise do, I feel as if I ridicule my God; if I read the scriptures like the erudite rationalist, I feel as if I have come to outwit my God. But when I worship like a madman, read the scriptures like a madman, dance like a madman, and work like a madman, then I am supremely happy; for then the two elements become united in me.

The third ingredient of my life is the insatiable thirst, the inordinate crazing of the inebriate. There is in this world the intoxication from drinking wine, in the spiritual world, too, the symptoms of our inebriates are not different. Because, to be a drunkard is to go on increasing the dose, so it is with us. Our devotions at one time lasted only five minutes, now they go on for five hours. Formerly we were content with taking the name of God only once ; now we take it a great many times and even that does not satisfy ; we want to go on with it. Formerly, one look at God would suffice, now I have to sit gazing at Him fascinated. Formerly, ordinary liquor would do, now I must have strong wine. I believe that the great inebriates—Jesus and Chaitanya, are now playing the inebriate's role to perfection. The like of it is not to be found on this earth ; and rarely is that quality of wine found here below. It is true we also pray with folded hands ; but that is one kind of prayer ; while the prayers of Moses and Jesus belong to a different order altogether. The very thought of it is enough to make one lose his senses. One wants nothing else but to revel in a state of utter inebriation.

What other symptoms has the inebriate ? Like the inebriate he wishes not only to increase his dose, but as his heart expands under the influence of drink, he seeks to swell the number of boon companions. I also want a larger number of companions, a more numerous body of fellow-believers, a more extensive field for our singing parties. There was a time when I was satisfied if I could speak of God to a thousand men, or join in processional singing with a thousand singers. Now I am not satisfied even if I get six thousand people. My heart hungers for more. O Lord, when will our number increase ? This natural desire of my heart makes me continually try for a larger fellowship. If all continually drink of the nectar of heaven, then,

I feel, will my hearts desire be fulfilled. So long as the East and the West are not maddened and inebriated with divine love, will God-intoxicated (red with drink) eyes glow with joy and satisfaction. One cannot hold a drinking-bout alone; nor can I enjoy to satiety by revelling only with a hundred thousand men. I want to revel in the company of millions of men.

The child longs for a troop of children; the mad-man desires only the company of mad men; and the inebriate seeks only inebriates. I am ever on the look-out for the God-possessed and the God-intoxicated, that I may be the more a child, the more an inebriate, the more a mad-man. I shall find out my fellow countrymen in the spirit land wherever and wherever they be. I adore and hug to my bosom these three persons of three typical natures. The three spiritualities they present I value as precious, as being jewels fit to be worn on the head. So long as the spirit of the child, the madman and the inebriate is with me, so long happiness and holiness are surely mine. The day I become old, forego my meanness and my inebriety leaves me, and I shall be no more under the spell of intoxication, that day I shall have to embrace death. May God grant that I may never be parted from these three.

O Thou Friend of the poor, Thou Boundless Ocean of mercy, what happiness I find when I rest in Thy lap. I feel guilty when I think I have grown in years, and acquired wisdom and piety. The more I keep in mind the fact that I have attained nothing, and that my place is in the mother's lap, the happier I feel. I am not only afraid of getting old, but I am afraid lest some one else come to take me away from Thy lap. It frightens me to look at old people. The knowledge that I know none but Thee, O Mother, is the only saving and comforting knowledge. May I know Thee

more and more, this is my prayer. May I drink nothing but the milk of Thy breast. As an infant but just come into the world, I am as yet unable to take solid food and meat, I am not yet old enough to stand up, and I must, therefore, continue in Thy lap. Merciful mother, the more I drank the milk of Thy breast while absorbed in worshipping Thee, and revelled in the joys of the childhood state, the more the spirit of the madman and the inebriate possessed me. I wondered what might be in Thy milk,—the narcotic of *Datura Stramonium* or the intoxication of wine—which induced the swooning bliss in the child who drank thereof. As often as I have drawn in Thy milk I have been overpowered by madness and intoxication. When I go to speak or preach with the lacklustre eyes of the unintoxicated I make blunders. When I engage in spiritual exercises with the lacklustre eyes of the unintoxicated I fail. But when I am in an intoxicated state these come off very well. As I call upon Thee crying, "Merciful Mother", "Merciful Mother", Thy milk streams into my mouth, and the intoxicating ingredient Thou hast mixed with it makes me mad. I then talk incoherently and behave like a drunkard. But, Mother, such talk and such behaviour make me happy. I do not want to be worldly-wise. Keep me perpetually young ; may I never grow old. It matters not if the hairs of my head turn grey ; but may I never suffer from senility of the soul. I swear by Thy name, O Lord, it is a blessed thing to remain a child for ever. Like unto a child in whom there is no guile I will converse with Thee in my devotions in simple words. Crookedness I abhor ; insincerity brings no happiness. Let not the virus of old age enter into the child-body. Thou art my Mother, I only wish that Thou wouldst rock me in Thine arms and kiss my mouth. I pray Thee from the pulpit of this House of God (Brahma Mandir), to take

us up in Thy arms and fondle us. O Compassionate Mother, bless me that I may ever remain a child, and live charged with the spirit of the madman and inebriate. May I cast off what little of age has crept into my life and become as a child. O Loving Mother, drunk with the new wine of spiritual religion, we will attain to a state of utter inebriation, and dance like a madman and a child. And so dancing enter heaven. With a heart full of hope and love bow to Thee again and again !

CHAPTER XIV

MY CASTE : *RICH OR POOR ?*

If mankind be divided into two classes, the rich and the poor, to which class should I consider myself to belong ? My soul, what class art thou in ? Art thou the offspring of the rich or of the poor ? Many a time I have had to ask myself the question,—“Art thou descended from a rich family or art thou to be counted among the poor ; ” The answer to this question forms an important chapter of my life-gospel. It is necessary to know in what caste my soul was born. One naturally wants to ascertain what is one's nature, like unto which caste are one's tastes, inclinations, and modes of action, and with what group of people one desires to associate. First of all, I want to know to which class of men I belong. After much enquiry, and twenty-five years of minute self-examination and thorough searching of the mind's desires and inclinations it has been conclusively proved that my soul is of the caste of the poor. The blood in my body is the blood of the humble, and the substance of my brain is that of the lowly. In the food-habits and the other things connected with my daily life will be found abundant proof of my poverty. If my conclusions were based on mere supposition, it might be false, and its utterance from the pulpit would be great sin. But I have come to the above conclusion, after a close observation of the innermost desires of my heart for a number of years. With truth as my witness, I declare there is no falsehood, no error, no conjecture in it. Tested by manifold trials, I now declare myself poor.

Though sprung from an aristocratic ancestry, though all manner of riches and possessions indicate opulence, there is no feeling corresponding to them in my heart. Though there is wealth, there is no desire for it ; though there is rich and delicious food, there is no appetite for it ; I am satisfied with plain things. Honour and fame surround me, but my heart takes no notice of them. If both the rich and the poor come to me, my heart instinctively seeks the poor in preference to the rich, and I enjoy their company. Judging by all this, it is clearly seen to which class my soul belongs. These tests save the Judge from falling into any error. They cannot mislead, for they have been tested in particular instances and circumstances. And yet while I am poor at heart my outward circumstances are those of the rich. It is under conditions of such contrast that the real character of the soul can be quickly detected. Had I been born in a poor man's cottage instead of in the mansion of rich, it would have been difficult to conduct this self-examination. For then the fever of the desire of wealth and possessions might have inwardly consumed me, while, outwardly, from sheer necessity I would have lived in a poor style. When, however, the outward condition is that of the rich, it should be ascertained whether, inwardly, there is a corresponding rich-man-mentality. When such a man shuns riches and seeks poverty, it is to be understood that poverty is native to his spirit, and he belongs to the caste of poor men.

Though brought up by a rich father and grandfather and surrounded by the appurtenances of wealth and prosperity, my soul gave evidence of its native spirit of poverty with the growth of years. I had not to take great pains to practise poverty ; it comes naturally to me. I am satisfied with plain food ; it is rice and vegetables for which only I have a craving. It is a sort of temptation for me to be served with green vegetable leaves. This fact reveals a

marvellous mystery of my inner life. It may not be interesting to others but to me it is a wonderful thing. That my heart naturally, finds such satisfaction in vegetable leaves, that it derives so much pleasure, enjoyment and delight in such common things,—this I take to be a sure sign of God's special grace for me. If I have to go any where by rail, I feel afraid to leave the third class for travelling by the first. For I fear lest I should be trespassing, intruding into the domain of the rich. I should then be uneasy all the time, and be robbed of all contentment and peace of mind by being thrown in the midst of associations and objects foreign to my nature. And the decision comes in a moment that it would be true to my nature to travel second class instead of the first, and third instead of the second. There is no other alternative left but to come to such a quick decision ; for my mind seeking comfort turns towards the accommodation reserved for the poor and the lowly. If ever I have to leave the third class and travel first, that would be only for the sake of conforming to some social obligation. But if I consult my heart, it says, 'For you there is comfort only in the third class ; the first class is not so free from embarrassing situations as the third.' This line of reasoning convinces me that I was destined for the poor, not for the rich. Where the poor are, there alone I find my rest and feeling of security.

All these symptoms characteristic of the poor, I did not acquire by any striving ; they became explicit and pronounced by themselves. When I have to walk in the streets I go like a poor man. Who told me that at processional singing I should walk barefooted like poor men ? For it is, verily, the mark of the poor. Whence did I learn it ? I did not stop to consider what the rich would think of it. Why did I do it knowing full well that the the newspapers would ridicule me and I would be lowered in the estimation of the

public? I did not stop to think why I did so; I did not even regard it as a matter for consideration. I simply took off my shoes and walked barefooted. O my soul. I never did teach thee poverty, yet thou didst, learn it; I did not house thee in a hovel, yet thou didst, of thy own accord, choose to walk through the dust. Many more instances of this kind might be cited. The world may understand it or not, but I have understood aright that my soul is the soul of the meek, my mind is the mind of the long-suffering, and my body is the body of the poor and the lowly. In all things the signs of poverty and lowliness are in evidence. Did I sit with the rich? Do I shake hands with men of high position? But can the doing of such things change the bent of my nature? Can the untouchable (*chandala*) become a Brahmin by merely touching a Brahmin? Can a man whose daily food is rice and vegetables be reckoned rich by dining one day on the Emperor's table? This nature of mine will never change; and, therefore, I am unspoiled even while mixing with all classes of people. I have found plenty of evidence of my own caste; and also guessed and ascertained by signs who else bear the marks of this caste.

Here I ought also to tell you of a law written in the scripture of my life. Although I associate with those who are poor and humble, although those that are in rags and needy and are satisfied with little are my bosom friends yet this lesson has been driven home to me. It was said of old, "While you give honour to the poor, despise the rich; disregard men in power; the rich cannot take to the path of salvation; there can be no virtue where there is rank, wealth and honour; religion dwells only in the poor man's hut." But according to the scripture of the new age, according to the code of the New Dispensation,

it is decreed, "Ye shall honour the rich as well as the poor, for both are journeying heavenward. There is no harm in outward riches if one is only poor at heart. Shall one be debarred from pilgrimming on the path to heaven because, outwardly, he happens to possess wealth? Draw unto yourself the poor; draw unto yourself also the rich. Give your love to both devoid of all partiality." New is this gospel of the New Dispensation, new its teaching. He Who is Righteousness dwells in the king's palace as well as in the poor man's cottage. He who is a lover of God, he embraces the nobleman as well as the outcaste. The true lover of his kind, he is the same to the Sovereign and his poor subject. To him the rich man does not appear as rich, nor the poor as poor, man as such claims love.

This precept became the ruling passion of my life; and there was reason for it. Though I came out of the mother's womb endowed with a humble nature and a lowly spirit, and though from early life I knew myself to be poor and lowly, yet looking round I found myself in a rich family, in a palatial mansion, surrounded by servants and maid-servants and other appurtenances of wealth. Right and left of me there was nothing but the pageant of wealth. Thus a struggle ensued between my outward circumstances and my inner nature. I asked myself—Why was I not born in the house of an untouchable, in a family where there were no servants, no carriages, no horses? I asked, why God gave a poor man like me a place among the rich? Why did I walk with rich boys in my boyhood and with rich young men in youth? Why did I, on attaining age, enter the college to receive higher education? God knew there was a deep meaning in all these. Why all this happened to me I did not understand at that time. If coming from amongst the poor, I had lived in a poor home, and

followed the manners of the poor, I would probably have been partial to the poor, and would have sought to hurt the axe on the head of the rich. Who knows if I could have been impartial had I been in a poor family? The Lord of my life ordained that I should be born in a rich family; and, by way of contrast, He concentrated all poverty within my heart while holding before my eyes the glamour of huge opulent household. Thus in spite of all this opulence in the outer world, I could behold, by shutting my eyes, the reality of a world of penury within. I bowed down to God a thousand times for placing me under these two opposing influence I became partial to the rich, I also became partial to the poor. I forgot all differences; ignoring the distinctions of colour and caste, I extended my love to all. Now with both arms outstretched, I have been drawing in the rich man as also, with a loving embrace, the all-renouncing poor wanderer, into the fold of the New Dispensation. I have been seating the rich and the learned on one side, and the poor and the unlearned on the other. I am gathering together those who can read as well as those who cannot. All are coming forward to accept my loving embrace; all are coming in and filling the house of the New Dispensation.

What a happy and blessed day is this! How fortunate am I to have discovered this dual nature in me. How fortunate am I to have been born on the common meeting-ground of the high caste and the low caste, the learned and the unlettered. Therefore, do I now cry to the Lord, saying, "Shall the rich not possess Thee simply because they possess wealth? Shall the scholar be refused admittance into Thy house simply because of his classic (Sanscrit) learning? Wilt Thou send away him who has no learning at all?" The New Dispensation answers, "The arms of God are outstretched for all. What if thou art

poor and long suffering, attract by your love all classes of men into the house of God." I wish to say, again and again, with all the force at my command, that from this inner poverty of spirit, great good has come. With the waters of humility I have extinguished the fire of pride, I have swept away the vanity of wealth and learning. In the waters of humility have I found peace and benediction. For duty's sake I visit people in high places, go to the rich, and ally myself with aristocratic families for purposes of social intercourse and conventions. But in spite of all this, I know full well that I am lowly, very lowly, indeed, that I am undeserving, utterly undeserving. Humble myself, I have given the place of honour to rich and poor alike, and embrace both in love. I kept to my caste of the poor and the lowly, and therein ■ my peace and happiness. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they alone shall find salvation.

O Merciful God, Friend of the poor, how often the attainment of high position in the world puffeth up the heart with pride ; how often is the spirit led astray when surrounded by honour and wealth. But, Lord, how can pride find a place in his heart whom Thou hast established in humility from infancy, yea, from his very birth ? Because of my belonging to the caste of the poor, how much I have profited in the company of the poor in spirit ; and how enthusiastically have I joined in processional singing ? I have reaped an abundance of spiritual harvest even in the midst of wealth and honour. Had I belonged to the caste of the greatly rich I might have been tempted to commit great sins. If I had not a partiality for very simple food I would not have hungered after Thee and known Thee ; and I would not have occupied this pulpit to-day. Thou knewest that if Thou mad est Thy son belong to the rich caste, he would succumb to the fever of riches ;

and, therefore, thou deemest it fit to make him one of the poor. Seeing the danger I would be in, knowing that pride and death (spiritual) would otherwise overtake me, Thou didst, O Ocean of Mercy, say to Thyself, "Let me give this child the mind and soul of the poor. and form his tastes after the manner of the poor." Entering life as one of the poor, how happy have I been from my earliest years. This poverty of spirit I have found to be the secret of all I have achieved. Instead of being a curse, it has proved a blessing. Storms have burst over my head, but nothing seemed to have touched me. Though I find myself rising to ever greater heights of eminence and shaking hands with so many celebrities, I had never to suffer from the fever of riches. None in the Brahmo Samaj has been so sorely tempted as I have been, none else seems to have had any trials worth the name. I find my own household now allied to a princely household, public estimation of mine has risen very high. But notwithstanding all this, my caste would not leave me. Because of my trust in Thee even fierce storms could not overwhelm me. Because, it is as if I am still following my humble calling, as people of my class do, weaving straw mats or hawking the molasses in the street ; because I am always seeking the company of poor people ; therefore, have I escaped destruction. Otherwise, I would have been swallowed up by wealth and, prosperity and been lost for ever. I realized the truth of the saying, "Whom God protects none can destroy." O God, humility has been my salvation. Now, abiding in Thee, I am calling all to come. Come ye, who are rich, come also ye brothers who are poor. I belong to the family of the rich, and when they invite me I go to them. I love the rich and the learned. I love kings and queens, I love and honour the Empress, I no longer fear the company of the rich. All fear departs when one attains perfection. O Lord of the lowly, vouchsafe:

unto all that quietness of heart and that humility which is the mark of spirituality. We are verily poor. The New Dispensation is the dispensation of the poor. When we will walk the streets as the poor do, humble ourselves to the dust ; and, in token of deep humility, take the straw between our teeth, then will we find heaven within our grasp. Graciously grant us this blessing that we may all be poor in spirit, and fulfill our destiny by enjoying heavenly bliss on earth.

CHAPTER XV

ALWAYS LEARNING TEACHABILITY AND PERFECTIBILITY

The world is a Divinity School. As long as we have to be in this school we shall continue to cultivate spirituality, acquire knowledge and thereby realise God. Therefore I had never conceived myself as teacher ; nor shall I ever believe that I am a teacher. I came into the world as a learner. I am leading the life of learner, I shall continue to be a learner for eternity. The cardinal principle of the Sikh religion, namely, to go on learning, is inherent in my blood. From this spirit of the learner, my life-tree derives its sap growing in strength and vigour daily ; and it is this spirit that is becoming more potent every day in my blood. I have always learnt in the past, I am learning still, and my passionate desire is to go on learning for ever. I learn in the morning, I learn in the middle of the day. I learn in prosperity as in adversity, I study. I learnt different chapters of the book of religion. Every living creature as such is my preceptor, every object as such is my teacher ; and I learn many things from human nature in particular. I open my eyes and I see I am in a school, I close my eyes and I find myself in a grander school within. As my desire to learn is intense, so the things to learn are unlimited. Manifold truths and saving wisdom lie unfolded before me. I never felt there was any dearth of books ; I never believed that the time would ever come when I will cease to learn. To learn is the one business of my life ; it is my life my joy, my salvation. So many precious truths have I acquired in the course of my learning that I cannot finish recounting them. And I know now that I shall earn much more riches

(precious truths) the future. I never could think that I had finished learning.

Many, indeed, are the teachers from whom I have been learning truths. The firmament above, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the water are my preceptors; to all sorts of teachers I am in pupilage. I have not done so from a sense of duty, or under a religious obligation. Unto this has my whole nature been preparing itself; in learning alone is my joy and happiness. I feel, perhaps, a far greater joy when I receive any new truth of religion or of morality than was felt by the discoverer of America on his discovery, or when an observer beholds something of wondrous beauty. When do I rejoice with exceeding joy? It is when I am able to grasp truth, I have never acquired truth by any intellectual effort of mine. It is not my calling to sift out truths bit by bit from a study of various scriptures. That has not been my way of learning. Truths flash across my mind as the lightning flashes in the midst of profound darkness. While I am looking at an object, doing some work, or gazing at a tree, seems as if some One presents me with a truth. A truth enters into my mind; instantly my heart is illumined as with a lightning flash, and my whole being is thrown into commotion. Each truth comes to me by giving my mind a shock. Many are the truths already discovered. I have found them to be wholly new. I have constantly received new truths; and directly I receive a truth peace and contentment fill my heart. With a heart overflowing with joy I discovered that this is the way in which, in the spiritual world, the joyful Mother dispenses Her truths to Her devotees. And each truth revealed confers a special and lasting benefit on life. Thus while it fulfilled the claims of reason, it added to the character the beauty of holiness. The most important thing, however, is, that the acquisition of truths brings me great joy. But for

the joy it brings who would take to the calling of expounding the scriptures ?

Did I then, adopt this calling after I had become proficient in the art of acquiring knowledge ? Shall I say that I have become perfect after passing the examinations in the prescribed courses of studies, and have now set myself up as a teacher ? A servant of God, I have never entertained the thought that I have learnt all there is to learn from the Divine Preceptor. Such thoughts never occurred to me when I delivered lectures at the Theological school, nor do I think so today occupying as I do the honoured place in this church. The thought never arose in my mind that I had finished learning, and that now I have only to teach. I never cherished such a notion either when I was a student or when I taught. I was a learner both when I learnt and when I taught. I gather truths by joining in the practice of spiritual culture with five others, and whenever I find the gems of truth quickening my heart I rejoice. I feel that it was a good fortune that I came into the world ; that the life of man is blessed indeed. Can the joy of teaching be as the joy of learning ? The acquisition of truth is the source of joy incomparable. The human soul stands in a certain relation to truth, unique and fundamental ; so that the moment I receive a new truth, I feel as if I have taken possession of a new world, as if a estate of the spiritual realm has passed into my hands.

When a musician, practising notes on an English or Indian instrument; happens to discover a new tune his joy knows no bounds. What raptures fill the appreciative heart on such an occasion ! Thinking that a new tune has come out through his throat, that the goddess of music has revealed a new music to him, he is overpowered with joy. Indeed, any new found treasure brings in such joy that heart cannot contain it. The humble fisherman, diligently fishing

in the river, daily catches the ordinary varieties of fish. In this he finds no more delight than that he has the reward of his labours and earns his livelihood. But if casting his net on a certain morning, he finds instead of the old variety an altogether new variety of fish, not seen or heard before, then his joy knows no bounds. An electric current of joy passes from end to end of his frame. A painter ordinarily reproduces the ideas and expressions, the forms, the features and the characteristic poses which he has learnt from his master. But if in the course of his painting a new colour-combination is discovered, a new ideal finds expression, or a new characteristic is bodied forth, he congratulates himself on his good fortune and exclaims, "Whence is this creation? Whence has come this new creation which I never learnt from anybody? From what source has it sprung?" Thinking thus, the painter in amazement is struck dumb like a statue. When does an astronomer, who spends his life in observing the movement of stars and planets, feel overjoyed? When that learned scientist, in searching the heavens, discovers a new luminary, it is then that he hastens to proclaim to the world the boundless joy of his heart. Not even the winning of a crore of rupees or the throne of an emperor would be expected to bring such joy unspeakable. When I find a new truth, I feel a far greater joy and happiness than the musician, the fisherman, the painter or the astronomer in exchange for such joy who would wish to be a rich man or desire to be king? If by the grace of God new truths be revealed, there can be happiness comparable to it.

I consider myself blessed because I have been endowed with the spirit of the learner. As in my young days at school, I regard myself as still under the vow of studentship. I never could finish the study of the four *Vedas*; it seems my student life will never end. The stupendous Himalayas—

they symbolize the immensity of the knowledge of God. I find evidence on all sides that knowledge can never be exhausted by any course of study. That knowledge is infinite,—I feel both in a general as well as in a special sense. Whether in regard to *bhakti* (Adoring love of God) or *yoga* (Mystic union and God vision), my task of learning will never end. What wonderful instructions have I received from the mouth of God as to how all the scriptures are to be harmonized; and they, have not ceased coming. How can there ever be any lack of things to learn for him whose teacher is the Living Lord of the Universe? I have not been the pupil of an ordinary teacher; nay my teacher is the World-Preceptor, He is constantly instructing me and the more I learn the more is my pride humbled. I have been learning these forty years, and yet I have not finished learning. I have learnt many truths about prayer, and yet my learning is not over. I do not yet fully know how to utter the name of the Merciful God. I have yet to learn the full meaning of 'love,' of 'charity'! Therefore, I cry shame on myself. And the instant I thus abase myself I learn new truths. Blessed am I that I am thus still, learning many truths.

I have not yet set myself up as a teacher. But because I am not a teacher, shall I for that reason behave selfishly, and not pass on to others the knowledge I have acquired? shall the treasures I possess remain locked up for ever in myself like the hoard of a miser? In the school of learning I have always practised the 'rule of receiving,' but never took up the 'role of giving' lessons or conveying truths to others. To disperse or give away truths is not the root principle, the primary concern of my life. But the law of nature is that whenever truth comes in, it must also find its way out. The people of our homeland in the spirit are so constituted that as soon as any truth is received by them

it publishes itself as a matter of course. Our compatriots have two doors to their houses ; one for the import and the other for the export of truths. By one way truth comes, by the other it goes out. Truth comes in and goes out to the world ; there it is doubled and comes back to the mind ; increased fourfold, it goes out again, and returns a hundred-fold. It increases when stored up in the heart, it grows still more when expended. When a truth is received, joy fills the heart ; when it finds its way into other hearts, the joy becomes greater still.

All my hopes and desires are centred in the acquisition of truths. Never once did I think as to how truth was to be imparted. I never thought out what I should say when I open my lips. Whenever I am called upon to speak, truth proclaims itself by a self-propelled power with irresistible force. The business of the professional teacher is vain and worthless ; I never adopted it. I never uttered truths, old and stale. You may be sure that what I spoke last year I will not repeat this year. I am now convinced that I have not come to teach but to learn ; and the things learnt will broadcast themselves. If the things that I said last year were reproduced this year, if I say today the prayer which I offered yesterday, if I repeat yesterday's lecture, I would feel I was plying the petty trade of teachership, and trying to win over the hearts of people by histrionic tricks. I would feel as if the fount of my inspiration has dried up, and I am dealing out silt and mud ; nay, as if even mud there is none, but dry dust. But never had I to say such things concerning myself, never did such a complaint escape my lips. As in many other things, so in this matter also the Merciful Lord has favoured me. I never had to worry saying, "I am blank, I know not what to say or think. I should be ashamed to turn yesterday into today, make old history appear as new and chew the old cuds. It would

be such a shame if I were to do so. My God, my Teacher, would be displeased to hear of such things. I had never to chew the old cud, I had never to rake the mud for stale stuff.

My eyes are not turned towards what I give or preach ; I pay attention only to what I am learning. This has been the saving of my soul. My tongue sticks to my palate the moment I think I am giving a good talk to the people ; words fail me, and both mind and body recoil at the thought. For me to learn is to teach : for me to acquire some truth is passing it on to others. The power and authority generated by the acceptance and assimilation of truths, are instantly transmitted from me to the persons of the hearers. When a truth comes into my soul, it is bound to pass on to others. When a truth is revealed unto me, it will surely be proclaimed everywhere with the blowing of conch shells and the peal of temple bells. When I look at India, I find that what I learn, India invariably comes to learn ; as if birds carry the truths in their beaks to all the houses in the land, as if my heart is connected with the hearts of my brethren by secret channels, and the truths of my heart are conveyed through them to all hearts everywhere. The moment the sun of truth illumines my heart, it illumines and enlightens all all other hearts. And the news comes to me that the truth is making its way into the mansions of the rich as well as to the cottage of the poor. Blessed be the Lord that truth coming to one man is becoming manifest in the hearts of ten thousand people.

We will go on learning truths for ever ; my one desire is that I may always learn. I wish to learn from everybody whoever he may be. If I see a common street-singer I love to sit at his feet and learn. When a mendicant minstrel comes to my house, I feel as if I have come by a lakh of rupees, and I learn much from his songs. Whoever comes

to me I believe comes with a new message ; and my one thought is if, by any means, I could only get somethings out of him ! It had been my experience that nobody ever came into contact with me and went away without giving me something. God has endowed my spirit with a power by which I can imbibe the good qualities of saintly men the instant I came into contact with them. As the pious man takes leave of me, I feel distinctly that he has poured the excellences of his heart into mine, and that I have become some what like him, I am a born learner ; I have been learning from my birth, and I have never ceased to learn : I shall always learn from every thing and every being. I shall learn even from the lowest and filthiest of animals. And thus ever learning I shall pass on to the next world

Thou Divine Teacher, in Thy great mercy, many things hast Thou taught me and shown me during this earthly life. Even as Thou art sustaining my body with daily bread, so art Thou nourishing my soul with ever new truths. I thank Thee for these mercies. How shall I put into words the secret things of my heart ? I cannot lay them bare before the public. Sitting at Thy feet (as a learner) I gather untold happiness. The more truth I learn the happier I am. When I acquire a new truth it makes me so happy that my heart seems to run mad with joy ; I want to shout at the top of my voice, my spirit is stirred to the depths : I say again and again, "Whence has this marvel of a new truth come, who has brought it to me ?" Lord, what a blessed privilege is it to learn truths from a Preceptor like Thee ! Thou hast been dispensing only happiness to Thy child who knows no other refuge but Thee. Tell me, Mother Divine, if I have ever left Thee and sought the shelter of any other preceptor ? Did I ever wish to give up learning after I left school, or seek to become a classical scholar by studying in an academy of Sanscrit learning ?

The source of all my inspiration is at Thy feet ; all my learning and wisdom I gather from the dust of Thy feet. I have not become wise with any other wisdom ; therefore, Thou hast been teaching me scripture and philosophy, literature and history, and everything else. He whose Mother is the Goddess of learning, his house is a veritable Divinity School ; and his teaching is never neglected. Make us eternal learners, keep us ever in pupilage, that we may go on learning for ever. What is this petty, puny human being that he should be so conceited ? Why is the number of teachers increasing, so much ? How is it that every one is so bent upon teaching, and not caring to learn ? Grant unto man the right spirit—a better understanding ; may he have the good sense to see that to learn is to teach. No more do I wish to go out preaching ; for when truth comes, it will propagate itself. If there be ever an end to my learning truths, then there will be an end to my imparting it to others. But || Thou makest me wise with the undying wisdom of ages,—the eternal and infinite revelation (*Veda*), then only can I say that neither my receiving nor my giving away truths will ever come to an end. Never had I to feel the want of truth in my life. Truths come swarming in lavish profusion. I shall spend the rest of my life in learning and only learning. I shall ever continue to study as a pupil in Thy Vedic school. Teach these Thy worshippers hundreds and thousands of Thy as-yet-unrevealed New *Vedas*. Destroy our pride and make us all humble. So long as we live, we shall keep the vow of studentship and make our lives beautifull by the acquisition of saving truths. Do Thou graciously grant us this blessing. This is our humble prayer to Thee !

CHAPTER XVI

MISREADING MY LIFE : A WARNING

There are some not having read the scripture of my life, or studied all its chapters thoroughly, have said things which are unjust, and are, therefore, guilty of untruth before God and man. It is necessary to determine unerringly what these false statements are. Those who arrived at conclusions without going into the deeper details of my life-scripture, and have thus been guilty of making untrue allegations ; these falsehoods should be refuted. Who are guilty of lying ? Who are the offenders ?

This pulpit does not hesitate to call them liars who place me—a worm of hell—in the same class with the great prophets sent by God, and honoured and revered by the world—men like Jesus and Chaitanya,—the inspirer of holiness and the guide to salvation. It is a most preposterous thing to say that I belong to the same category as they. Shall I be classed with those, the dust of whose feet I am not fit to hold on my head ? Those beside whom I cannot presume to sit, whom the whole world holds in reverence, and from whom it received help in the path to salvation, I too, approach them as a sinner seeking salvation, and shall not occupy the same seat with them as the helper of humanity. I count myself among those who sit at their feet, listen to their precepts, follow their example, and I glory in doing so. My peace and happiness are in this that by taking their name I am sanctified, and dance in joy.

Again, this pulpit adjudges them guilty of lying who assert that my character is spotless, and that no sin is to be found in me, and that I am one of the greatest of saints. It

is distinctly stated in the scripture of my life that there were many sins in me, that serious faults and blemishes, propensities in the form of complexes, were attached to the root of evil in my being which have not yet been cut away. Let no one enter my name in the same class as the saints, the recollection of whose names brings sanctification. Rather let every one think that just as many a one fights with his secret sins so do I. Like them, too, I am a mixture of good and evil. As they pray for improvement of character, so do I.

Just as any other man, in spite of defects in him, receives truths from God and ventures to preach to others, so do I receive truths and preach them. To be a minister does not mean that I have purified myself and am now engaged in purifying others. Why, then, have I become a Minister? Only to transmit to others some of the precious truths that I have received, to pass on to others all the great thoughts that have come to me. With the natural proneness to sins, I should be ashamed to occupy the Minister's seat if it were for the purpose of ministering to the spiritual good of others. But I am determined to give unto others what I have little by little received from heaven. Although I am not fit to be classed with the good and the great, nor fit to sit in the company of the holy sages and seers, nay, not fit even to sit at their feet; yet it must be admitted that, with their holy name on my lips, I have been keeping loyal to my vow of subduing my passions, and that wisdom and holiness, love and peace are continually flowing from God to me.

Again, those who assert that mine is not an inspired life, that I have not seen God nor heard His voice, they, too, lie. Rather the truth is, the infallible truth of my life is, that often and often I see God and hear His voice. Indeed, my very existence hangs on it. They therefore,

see the truth, who maintain that in spite of my unworthiness, I have, not once or twice but hundreds and thousands of times, been given to see God and hear His nectar-laden heavenly words, which have not only sanctified and sweetened my life but increased my thirst for more of such seeing and hearing. On the contrary, those who maintain that I have neither seen God nor heard His voice, that my God-vision is an hallucination, a figment of the imagination, then the world will sooner or later prove to be liars. I hear Him speak, Him Whom I worship as my God and love as my friend. And this seeing and hearing is just as natural and common an affair as it is to eat and dress. They, therefore, are also liars who because of this assertion of mine, insinuate that I am attempting to occupy a position superior to all others.

Those who deny my seeing and hearing God are liars just as much as those, who because of my God-vision and inspiration, mark me out a pre-eminent personality. Seeing God is not the mark of an extraordinary personality; hearing the voice of God is nothing uncommon. Seeing God is like seeing material objects in direct vision. I think as He inspires me to think, I speak as He prompts me to speak. I preach as He exhorts me to preach. Thus my union (*yoga*) with Him is an extremely simple affair. Over and above this, if there is any other esoteric vision of God or mode of union with Him, I have not experienced it. In these points of direct vision and audition, I have no difference with other mystic seers and devotees. As seeing and hearing outer sights and sounds my experience is real, and cannot be otherwise, so are my seeing and hearing God. If any man thinks that like other people, I rely upon my intelligence, make various inquiries, gather all kinds of information, take the counsel of people, and then engage in an undertaking, he indulges in a lie. But those who

believe that I have been authorized by God to hold certain offices, that is God Himself who reveals truths to me, that it is He who provides for my family and manages my worldly affairs, they alone know the truth and speak the truth. They are liars who accuse me saying that I am harmonizing the various religions by intellectual ingenuity, that by dint of stupendous effort and energy I can make mountains (Himalayas) move. Such are the varied judgments people have formed about my life.

But I am he who has a trusting faith like a child, who takes no thought for the morrow who from the beginning of his spiritual life has refrained from all worldly avocations, who listens not to man's counsel, who does not set up a committee of executives to take orders from them for his guidance, who looks up to Heaven alone, and follows whatever intimations come from out of the depths of the unknown. In the life of this solitary individual terrible trials have come during the last twenty-five years, not only has he overcome them all, but, in the might of the indwelling light, is now emboldened to face still greater trials. The way in which God guides man is very clearly made manifest in the life of this person. There is the One (God) Who takes the oar and does the rowing, while the other (man) lets himself be carried along ; there is the One Whose prevenience determines the way so that the other gives no thought to it ; if you want to be enlightened on this mysterious operation of the spirit in my life, you should read this *Jeevan Veda*,—my life-gospel. I never took up any remunerative service or business for my maintenance, but all along God Himself has provided for me and still does so. Those who declare this to be the mark of a superhuman personality, they are liars. For, just as I have placed my life in the hands of God, so have millions of devout men, men of faith in God, done. It is not at all an uncommon

thing. We have read of such dedicated lives in many books. There can not be the least doubt that God as the Holy Spirit in man steers the bark of human life. Therefore, do not say that our minister, by publishing this fact in his life-gospel, has suggested that his own life belongs to a higher order. A man may be illiterate and belong to a lower station in life, yet God, as a loving Mother, leads him on to the path of truth and worldly prosperity.

Who else is a liar ? He also is a liar who makes me out to be a man of wealth and learning. I have never considered myself rich, honoured or learned. You cannot truthfully call me rich ; for, besides the house I live in, I cannot say that I have a copper coin to my credit. If men place me among the rich, they do so erroneously. They do not know the real facts, and, therefore, they class me with the rich. But those who know the state of affairs from within are aware that I have not the means to be sure of morrow's morning meal. The only means I have got is the Lord himself.

If I do not call myself rich, I do not call myself needy either. Those who count me among the poor, they also fall into error. Who should be called poor ? He who mourns his lot as poor, is miserable. God, the Friend of the destitute, has not put me in the class of such people. If any man can be called rich without possessing riches, I am the man. The world's riches I look upon as trash. He, on Whom I depend in singleness of heart, without any thought for the morrow, He is verily my treasure. Why should I take thought for myself ? He Who has taken upon Himself the task of caring for me, He does it. My riches are not in my house and possession ; they are with His treasury. My Father has everything ; it only remains for me to ask and for Him to give. But they who, having deposited a large sum of money in the bank, think that they

have made ample provision for their family, making poverty in future impossible because of the big monthly income coming therefrom, think wrongly.

My learning, too, is not of this earth. With truth as my witness, I declare that what an ordinary educated man of our time knows I do not know even as much. Furthermore, I have not that command of language as to be able to express what I know. I have not had the full course of training at College, so any comparison with the learned would be gross misrepresentation. I have not what would entitle one to call himself learned ; but I am not indifferent to the acquisition of knowledge. This, however, does not mean that I have no knowledge of God, or that I cannot preach. One Who is All-knowing, dwelleth with me, and my eyes are on Him. All my lack of learning is made up by my listening to the words of Him Who is the Fountain head of all sacred wisdom. If He who saveth every man from shame, helpeth me, then, indeed I am not put to shame. He provides me with all that I need for my preaching.

And honour ? Whom do you call the honoured ? If men of eminence cultivate my acquaintance I consider it as a matter of favour. Whatever of honour has come to me is due to God only. My honour is His gracious gift. I never had any worldly honour and never shall. I have received no kind of honour from men of the world ; and therefore there is no fear of my losing it. As God is my riches, so, He is my learning and wisdom, my honour and authority.

It will now be easy to find out who have misread my life, and who are guilty of falsehood with regard to it. Every one should now think of the way how this life may be guided by God as mine has been. I have achieved nothing

by self. Riches, learning, honour and peace are nowhere to be found except at the feet of God. He is all-in-all. This is the root-meaning and substance of the scripture of my life.

Thou friend of the poor. Giver of protection, all these twenty five years of my life are a testimony unto Thee alone. My life reveal only Thee unto the world. So shall I be blessed. What have I done with my life but commit sins ! What hast Thou done ? Everything,—to save me from all perils. I had neither learning nor wisdom, but Thou didst teach me the science of religion. O Friend of the poor, do Thou now reveal Thyself in person to each devotee and make him blessed. I am not able to destroy my own sins ; but I am prepared to bear testimony to what Thou hast done and art doing in my life. O, how this life of mine has become a golden one ; and how Thou hast made it so. Thou hast made my heart even as a piece of diamond. How low I was, and how exalted hast Thou made me ! I who lived an ant's life, crawling in and out of its hole, carrying grains of rice in its mouth. I am now raised to the holy pulpit of this church. Why has all this happened ? To show that he alone is happy whom Thou makest happy ? He whom Thou choosest to favour with riches, honour and wisdom he alone becomes blessed. Let men all over the world read this *Jeevan Veda*, this life-Gospel of mine, and discuss its contents, not to praise me, but to remove from men's minds the wrong notion that God is far off, that He has ceased to work miracles and have personal dealings with His devotees in the wonderful way He used to do in the past. O God, I will wipe out this lie with my lifeblood. Let men read the Life Gospel of this sinner, ponder over every word of it ; and let faith and *bhakti* surge up mightily within them. Thou hast brought me money and means ; thou hast brought me wisdom ; and thou hast brought me every other thing that I have. Do

Thou now grant me this boon that my ministrations from this pulpit may bring about this good result,—that men looking at my life may realize from what a low state I have been lifted up, and how I who had nothing now possess so much ! To what backwaters was the bark of my life drifting, and to what landing has it been brought to-day ? Almost at the gates of the highest heaven ! O God, I am Thine, Thine alone am I. I will speak and act as Thou dost bid me do. May men read this life gospel, and say how good art Thou, and may its perusal bring to Thy lotus-like feet the whole world ; intoxicating it with divine love and *bhakti*. This is the blessing I ask of Thee !

APPENDIX

INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTION AND REALISATION

A SYNOPSIS

[1. Meaning of *Viyoga* and *Samyoga* : Their synonym—Reflection and Perception.

2. They are functions : Opposites and dynamic balance (*Viparita-samanjasya*).

3. One sidedness condemned : Corrective in many-sidedness.

4. Two laws (a) Alternation of attention (b) Diverse attitudes are at once, individual and universal.

5. Reflection and Perception applied to God and His attributes.

6. Attributes—seven fold ; Two for God alone : Their interaction : Yoga—Objective and Subjective.

7. Relation of Yoga to Reflection and Perception : Extract Appendix : Rectification.

8. Process of Infinitization and Acceleration : "Stability of swift motion."]

The twelfth chapter of the *Jeevan Veda* is called *Viyoga* O *Samyoga*. In these two words in Bengali there is one word common to both *yoga* to which are added two prefixes *Vi* and *Sam*. *Yoga* means union or connection and

Vi and *Sam* mean respectively out and in with. Thus *Viyoga* means out of connection, disconnected and *Sanyoga* means in union, connected. The two words of the heading have been variously translated as :—

Analysis and Synthesis

Parts and the Whole

Differentiation and Integration.

This chapter being a summing up of all the previous chapters in its condensed form, a source of great confusion. In this breath-taking rapid survey of his life experiences Keshub not only jumps as it were from peak to peak or rather takes aerial photographs of the spiritual horizon but at the same time gives an X-ray picture of the working mechanism of his inner development, and the confusion springs from the mixing up of the structural and the static with the functional and the dynamic elements in it. All confusion is however cleared up when we try to find some synonym from Keshub's own English writings. We have found that the exposition given in an article entitled, "Perception and Reflection" of 1873, corresponds with the the exposition given in the *Jeevan Veda* of 1882. For the convenience of readers it is reproduced in the appendix. Incidentally it shows that the dynamic process, described in *Viyoga O Samyoga* about ten years later had already come to be consciously recognised and practised way of life with him before, perhaps long before, the year 1878.

Coming to the *Jeevan Veda* use of these words, we find that they are characterized as function (*kriya*), attitude (*bhaba*) and disposition (*spriha*) or predominant bent. So the twin processes, invariables of the mind are functions, attitudes or dispositions, begetting divergent types of men or mentality, one predominantly reflective and the other intuitive and the third a balanced type. Keshub brings in another word in connection with

these two types of consciousness in function, the reflective and the intuitive, and that is "*samanjasya*", "*Vipariter samanjasya*"; it means the dynamic balance of opposites, reconciliation, harmony, the transcendent status above and beyond the opposites, the middle way transcending the opposites. What was the experience which came to Keshub as an epoch making discovery of revolutionary vitality capable of interpreting aright the past and assimilating all that is divine and eternal in it, capable of solving all pressing problems in the present, as well as furnishing a formula for future progress and enlightenment? For him it was the panacea for all ills, the alchemist's *elixir vita* guaranteeing immortality, the philosopher's stone turning gross metals into gold, the miracle-working calculus solving the insoluble, and the master-key opening the treasure house of all secrets. It has been variously named,¹ as harmony, synthesis, perfection, "integral" at-one-ment—the New Dispensation! It is this that made him go through hell-fire to proclaim the message of spiritual independence while denouncing the curse of individualism; to bow his head to no one single prophet and yet accept them all together as body-members of one Ideal Man; to rest content not with one truth but to assimilate all truths in a many-sided progressive synthesis; to insist on the perfecting of every particular phase of culture raising each to its highest dimension and at the same time, to regard it as insult to God and one's own personality not to rise above and beyond the particular, the partial and the one-sided to the whole, the many-sided and the integral; and finally while declaring himself a dualist as regards God and man, proclaiming the unique doctrine of an universal at-one-ment of identity, in such expressions, "I and

1 *Samanjasya, samanyaya, shatmata, purnata, Navavidhan*—Vide 'Jeevan Veda' chap. xii.

my brother are one", "I in you and you in me", "Behind the visible I there is an visible we". Like the majority of mankind Keshub started with one-sided culture himself, but having quickly gone through the gamut of partial culture represented as developments of basic four-fold functioning of mind, heart, soul and will, he found their limitations, their handicaps, their enormities. And he brands them as "a menace", "a dismemberment", "an extremism that is hurtful", "an involuntary drifting", "an unsatisfying state", "a covering up of sin", "a self delusion", "a guilt", "an insult to God", "a cutting out of the heart of the New Dispensation", "a splitting up of religion", "a sectarianism", "a perverseness", and "an unfaith". And the corrective to this he found in an attitude of many-sidedness which involves the simultaneous ascension and harmonious development of all the parts.

In the course of his adventure in exclusive partial cultures he came upon two well-defined laws or characteristics of the inner life. The one is that the mind cannot keep itself pinned to any attitude or function for any length of time. It has again and again to shift its interest and attention not only to maintain a moving balance but keep it ever-moving upwards and onward. The other is that the diverse attitudes and functions which are always activated by some inner need prompted by the inner voice, while apparently fulfilling his personality at a particular stage are parts of a dynamic whole, at once individual and universal. It revealed the inner life as a comprehensive system of a pair of opposites, and as the ground of all moral effort and spiritual conquest. In this inner need and inner voice Keshub detects the mysterious operations¹ of a Transcendent

1. '*Prakritir Kaushala*', '*Bhagaban*', '*Purna Akhanda*'—Vide '*Jeevan Veda*' chesp. xii

Spirit of Perfection, a Creative Purpose of Nature which effects the reconciliation of opposites. Keshub had come upon not a haphazard juxtaposition, a mechanically dovetailed mosaic but a scientific technique, a spiritual valency, an inter-connectedness and "chain reaction" obtaining among diverse truths and historic personalities and "in all dispensations a continuity,"¹ Keshub applies the twin processes of reflection and intuitive perception and of their dynamic balance in connection with God and his attributes. This is the main theme of the present chapter.

God and his attributes says Hocking, "Is not the problem of religious knowledge, a problem of the attributes of reality?"² And does not Upadhyaya Gour Govinda remind us that "All doctrinal disputes centre round the attributes of the God-head".³ Keshub's mystic life of worship and communion beginning with simple prayer and finding fulfilment in Divine inspiration, passes through invocation (*udtcdhan*), adoration (*aradhana*), silent meditation (*dhyān*) and prayer (*prarthana*). It is in the devotional exercise of adoration that the place and function of the reflective consciousness in the spiritual life is seen in its fullness. *It is an absolutely new thing in the history of religious culture.* As arranged and developed by him it forms the framework on which is built up the new science of the theology of the New Dispensation. Keshub makes the exercise of adoration the field of the formful attributes, of reflective consciousness, while silent Meditation (*dhyān*) with its vision of the Undivided Formless Whole (*Akhanda Purna*) is the function of the

1. Initiation (*Diksha*)—*Vide* 'New Samhita'

2. W. E. Hocking—"The meaning of God in Human Experience", 1943 ed., p. 143

3. Upadhyaya Gourgovinda Roy in *Srikrishner Jeevan O' Dharma*, New ed., p. 250

intuitive consciousness.¹ In his sermon on "Divine Worship"², he speaks of God in His seven-fold attributes of —*Satyam-Jnanom-Anantam-Shivam-Adwitiyam-Shuddham-Anandam* (*Reality-Intelligence-Infinity-Love-Unity-Holiness-Joy*). Of these he assigns five attributes as common to God and man, and two to God alone.

These two attributes—marking the Goodhood are Infinity or Transcendence (*Anantam*) and the One-Without-a-Second (*Adwitiyam*), these two together constituting the Divine dynamics of God in the upper chamber, pressing down and upon the lower story human finitudes of the remaining five attributes.³ The interaction of these two—the human and the divine, their give and take, their intercourse is thus graphically described in his "Yoga : Objective and Subjective" :—

"Anon the Infinite bursts upon his (the worshippers) view. He shines as something awfully real, a burning reality. From the depths of his being this presence surges up as the fountain of vitality. From above, it descends like a continued shower of heavenly inspiration...A mere presence is soon transformed into a person all whose attributes, so far as they are visible to human ken, are plainly and clearly perceived. Here is Intelligence (wisdom) seen by the eye of reason, there Love which the eye of love apprehends; here Holiness revealed to the eye of conscience; and there is the centre Will-force or Personality, in which all these attributes inhere. As the eye to light and the ears to sound are by nature mysteriously linked, so the various organs of the

1. *Yoga*—*Vide* 'Indian Mirror' May 9, 1880

2. *Brahmopasana*, Nov. 20, 1881—*Vide* 'Sevaker Nivedana'

3. 'Dui Pakshi' May 21, 1881; 'Yogi Akshay O Apra', July 17, 1881—*Vide* 'Sevaker Nivedana'

self-bereft soul at once and naturally unite with their corresponding attractions in the Infinite Soul”.

This is from Keshub's last unfinished tract on “Yoga” written for the “Independent”, New York, U. S. A. What relation has Yoga, as Keshub defines it to Adoration and Silent Meditation? The Adoration, Meditation and Prayer are processes or exercises of Yoga-culture which had been revealed to him in the inspired moments of daily communion and collective worship (*utsava*) and tested in every-day life for twenty years. The form or prescribed order of seven-fold Adoration, and Meditation and Prayer is, as it were, the lines laid out for the engine of worship of daily Yoga-culture, to make its run of pilgrimage from the human to the divine—the Unfound, Undivided, Infinite. It is, as it were, the key-board set up to make the soul vocal with the harmonious song of the Eternal. As for the relation of Yoga to the twin processes of “Perception and Reflection” reproduced in the Appendix, we make the following extract :—

“In intuitive perception the mind apprehends the unity of God, not the multiplicity of divine attributes in a state of abstraction...The case is different however in reflection... After having seen an object we may reflect on its qualities apart from each other...After having beheld the one True God in our intuitive consciousness, we may subsequently reflect on some one of His attributes only...If we wish to have a complete scientific knowledge of the Deity we must have recourse to reflection. Thus the necessity of both kinds of knowledge, intuitive and reflective, is apparent. In the utility and necessity of this double cognition, it is easy to trace the mercy of the creator.

“But it sometimes so happen that men from partial conceptions of God...which not only involve intellectual errors, but also produce an unwholesome influence on character.

Hence it is of the utmost importance that they should be rectified. How? By attending habitually to those traits of the Divine character which have been ignored or neglected by us, or suffered to lie in the background. Those who have thought exclusively of Infinite justice must devote their attention to infinite kindness, till the two unite in our thought as they are really united in the God-head. Thus by perception we not only bring together all the Divine attributes but keep them on the same level, for each is infinite, and form a synthetic unity corresponding to the Real Divinity. Thus true reflection and true perception both perform important functions in theology and lead us to the same Divine unity."

What is said here about "rectifying errors of partial conceptions", and of raising each attribute "to the level of the Infinite" where alone they will merge into a Divine unity, fits in with Keshub's detailed teachings on "Yoga and Bhakti" in its higher stages, delivered in 1876, and published as the *Brahmagitopanishad*.

I have just dwelt upon the *process of infinitization*, if I may so call it, now I will refer to the *process of acceleration*, the speeding up to the highest, which the *Brahmagitopanishad* dilates upon and which the twelfth chapter touches upon in its concluding portion, and one process merging into the other and the two functioning as one, says the *Brahmagitopanishad* :—

"True yoga is a wheel continually revolving from the inner to the outer. From the outer it goes to the inner again. As the Yogi advances the gyrations become rapid and frequent, till the distance and the difference between the inner and the outer, become continually less. Forms grow formless, and formlessness shapes itself into forms. In matter the spirit is beheld, in spirit matter transformed."

This accelerative process is a spiritual necessity. It keeps up the tempo of the spiritual life at its maximum yet involving no strain, because like the revolving top the spiritual life keeps straight and moving only when keyed up to its highest. The plentitude of power, purity and peace, the capacity of absorbing shocks from within and without, the swiftness of instant readjustment all these come to the true Yogi who keeps himself connected with the Divine Dynamo.

Does not the new Adoration with its rich diversity bringing together justice and mercy, love and purity, work and wisdom, and other opposites serve as a gyroscope "a self-righting discipline ? But this stability of Keshub's Yoga, of Bhakti-cum-Yoga is "the stability of swift motion", and not the muddle inertness of the trance-induced pseudo yogi. It is not animation slowed down, much less suspended, but consciousness raised to its divinest dimension its highest potential, its creative status. It is *pravritti-yoga* where the human vessel passing through *nivritti-yoga* becomes the vehicle of the Divine. It is Yoga and Bhakti hyphenated, an at-one-ment (*ekatmata*) where worship and communion result in a many-sidedness of perfection which in its progressive ascent unites at the apex of inspiration where life becomes a *Veda*,—the *Jeevan Veda* ! Verily, as says Keshub,—"The holy word, the eternal Veda, dwell in every one of us."²

Thus ends the twelfth chapter with its triumphant paean of human perfection patterned after the Divine Fulness, of

1. *Nivritti and Pravritti Yoga*, 'Brahmagitopanishad', Aug. 19—20, 1880—Keshub
2. 'Marvellous Mystery—the Trinity'—Lectures in India

the passage from the part to the whole, where Divine communion leads to the building up of a happy family¹, or beloved community and inspired apostolate, a kingdom of God and where each individual attaining super-individual status can declare—'I and my Brother are One.'

1. 'Sukhi Paribara,' 'Bhak'ta Mandali,' 'Preriter Durbar,'—Keshub
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